Exclusive Interview with FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA!

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Dossier, edited by **Lou Stathis**, 4

The City that Didn't Exist, by **P. Christin.** Illustrated by **Enki Bilal**, 14

Tex Arcana, by **John Findley**, 21

Ranxerox, by **Tamburini.** Illustrated by **Liberatore**, 29

HM's Star Dissections, by **Drew Friedman**, 37

The Hunt for Louth, by **Jodorowsky.** Illustrated by **Arno**, 38

The Clips: Heavy Metal's First Annual Music-Video Awards, 47

Gallery: In a Word—Splendid! A Look at Rowena. Introduction by **Theodore Sturgeon**, 57

June 2050, by **Todd Klein.** Illustrated by **Murphy Anderson**, 62

Interview: Francis Ford Coppola—The Outsider, by **Robert Morales**, 63

The Odyssey, by **Francisco Navarro.** Illustrated by **José Martin Sauri**, 69

The Way of the Worlds, by **Nicola Cuti**, 77

Professor Neutron, by **Chris Lincoln**, 78

I'm Age, by **Jeff Jones**, 81

Zora, by **Fernando Fernandez**, 82

Rock Opera, by **Rod Kierkegaard, Jr.**, 92

The Bus, by **Paul Kirchner**, 96

Coming, 96

Front cover, by **Enric**

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DOSSIER

BLOW OP

Private eye Milo Milodragovitch was a world-weary, but still big-hearted and totally benign drunk when he was first introduced by novelist **James Crumley** in *The Wrong Case* (1976). Milo spends this year's ***Dancing Bear*** (Random House) in a harsh, jagged cocaine frenzy—basically as well-meaning as ever, but this time with a menacing edge that wasn't there before.

While Crumley would rather be known for his "serious" novels (a war story called ***One to Count Cadence***, and another he's currently writing about his native south Texas), for the moment he'll have to settle for being the most dynamic and entertaining hard-boiled detective writer of the post-Vietnam, drugged-out, rock 'n' rolled-out, fucked - and - sucked-out American west.

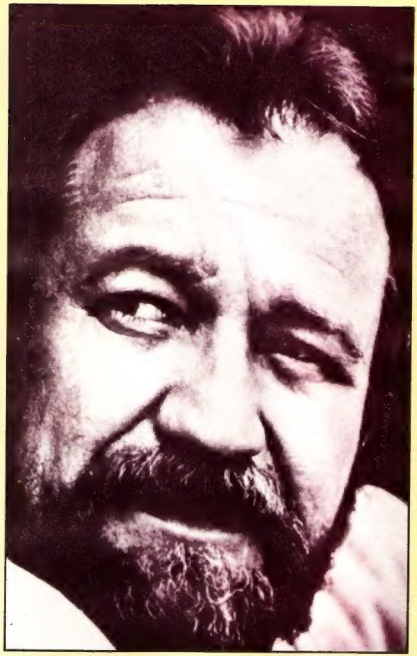
Once a quiet lumber town, Milo's home base of Meriwether, Montana (modeled after Missoula, where Crumley taught creative writing) is now prime pickings for the real estate and recreation industries, as well as a crossroads for the rootless types who wander purposelessly through the west. Milo's been married five times and is well past his own and the town's peaks.

In ***The Wrong Case*** (now available only as a Panther/Granada British pb), Milo agrees to find the younger brother of a woman he's fallen for at first sight. What looks like a simple murder case soon involves kinky gays, hard drugs, murder, organized crime, and a family living in fear of itself. In ***The Last Good Kiss*** (Pocket Books, 1978), Crumley's detective becomes one C.W. Sughrue (at the behest of his agent, who was trying to swing two film deals at once). While Sughrue is younger and has more of a chip on his shoulder than Milo, he's similar in other respects, including his diet of speed and whiskey. (Crumley writes knowingly about the ennui and exhilaration of aimless drinking.) Sughrue starts out tracking an alcoholic hack novelist, but quickly—on the basis of one heartstopping snapshot—he's chasing impulsively all over the west after an intoxicatingly beautiful small town girl who disappeared without a clue years earlier. In both books Crumley writes disparagingly about how the west tries to reconcile its (mostly mythical) past with its (mostly synthetic) present. His books portray the west mainly as a region where everything dead-ends, but Crumley says it ain't so.

"There's a kind of freedom of movement between classes you find only in the west. Even though it seems Republican, it's really democratic with a small 'd,'" he says by phone from El Paso, where he teaches part-time at the University of Texas. "You find an odd mix of people out here who are friends; rich people and poor people can be friends in the west."

Crumley became interested in the detective story when he discovered Raymond Chandler shortly after finishing his war novel—in fact, he lifted the idea for *The Wrong Case* from Chandler's *The Little Sister*, and *The Last Good Kiss* is his version of *The Long Goodbye*.

"But I'm not interested in the mystery as a puzzle, the detective as puzzle-solver, so I don't do much of that," he explains with a nervous laugh. "I think I was influenced too much by early 'Dragnet.' Remember how Joe Friday would go around and interview all these really strange people, and none were any help at all? That's what I like about the form, you can just go anywhere you want with it. And you can write those kind of awful metaphors Chandler and I use, like, 'It was as incongruous as a tarantula on a piece of angel food cake.' That part's fun."



James Crumley practices his hard-boiled look.

Photo © Lee Nye

Dancing Bear, his first novel that doesn't cannibalize Chandler, is ironically also his most disappointing. Milo is now older, more used-up, though he still tries too hard for his own good to see only the best in people. He's now working for a security agency, and fights his alcoholism by drinking only peppermint schnapps (which he hates), though his cocaine consumption has gotten out of hand. He takes what looks like a harmless freelance job from a woman who used to be his father's lover (and on whom he had a childhood crush), and the next thing he knows, cars are blowing up around him, he's stumbling onto

Anthony Burgess looks the apocalypse in the face.
Photo by Jerry Bauer

stashes of weapons and drugs, and professional muscle is out to kill him. Crumley's characters are as finely drawn as ever, but, for the first time, his disdain for plot becomes a problem, as key events fall into place too easily and implausibly. Worse, Crumley's infatuation with the coke mystique leads him to overwrite badly, to indulge in a form of literary power-tripping that ruins climactic scenes; it also undercuts his wildly black humor. *Dancing Bear*—and this is more observation than criticism—is a bleak and depressed novel.

Yeah, well, that *may* be what I've done, because I'm not always in control of what's happening," he concedes. "I guess it is bleak and depressing in the sense that the world is a place where you can't live, but Milo, in the end, is staying clean, he's sober, he's living a quiet and different type of life. I see those as hopeful signs; he's looking forward to something more, and I'd like to give him that something more."

Which means that despite the ending of *Dancing Bear* (which I won't give away any more than I have), there will be more Milo novels. They'll undoubtedly carry the same tension between the serious and the frivolous. Milo will remain torn between idealism and cynicism, and the American west will remain a wide-open canvas on which characters can paint their own fantasies, illusions, and outright lies.

—John Morthland

VIDEODOOM

In ***The End of the World News: An Entertainment*** (McGraw-Hill), the wily **Anthony Burgess** pretends to reject novelistic presentation for the more easily-scanned mode of TV programming, and then unreels three different plots (with several consistent themes) on three separate screens. Three screen viewing, Burgess projects, is the likely future of TV viewing—"true visual counterpoint." The three plots are derived from Burgess's choices for the three greatest achievements of this century: Freud's discovery of the unconscious, Trotsky's conception of universal socialism, and the invention of the space rocket; each of which forever changed the shape of the world. The latter is dramatized in a seriocomic epic about the end of the world—written deliberately and wittily in the vein of an Irwin Allen disaster film. Trotsky appears here in a "Broadway musical" about his 1917 visit to New York City; there's a constant breaking into song—unfortunately, there is no music supplied to animate the lyrics or visible choreography to flesh it out—and aside from the one bright spot of Trotsky's discourse on "love," it's this compendium's recurring lowpoint. Freud is biographed comically, as in the vein of Burgess's *Napoleon Symphony* and *ABBA ABBA* (about John Keats), and this central plot is interrupted whenever one of the others is in a position of making a thematic or stylistic comment on it—i.e., *true visual counterpoint*. For instance: as Freud's psychology club discusses how societal neuroses are derived from a thirst for power, Trotsky's emblematic view of himself is meanwhile outshining his own socialist doctrines, and the commander of a spaceship exodus from the doomed earth is showing unmistakable fascist tendencies.

By its very nature, *The End of the World News* is ideal for introducing those with a one-book view of Burgess to the whole protean artist: Burgess the musician, biographer, comedian, and fantasist. No one living has written so much of such high quality. In how many novels will you hear Sigmund Freud exclaim to Carl Jung, "I discovered the unconscious mind when you were still dabbling in your urine?" Burgess handles—juggles—the three great twentieth century discoveries so apparently cavalierly that it's surprising how *moved* one feels by the final page. Because, Trotsky and Irwin Allen notwithstanding, we are shown a spectrum of elemental truth about the human mind and human nature on an unabashedly compassionate screen—er, three screens. It's a pleasure to be reminded once again of how very good this writer can be.

—Timothy R. Lucas

ADVANCE AND BE RECOGNIZED

Jack Vance may be the best kept secret in fantasy literature. Oh sure, he's known as a great *science-fiction* writer—by those people who know sf (never mind the jerks who are making dross like the new Asimov a best-seller)—but he's not known for his high fantasy. And yet he wrote two books of pure high fantasy which rank with Mervyn Peake, James Branch Cabell, and T. H. White—and which are *better* than Tolkein. Namely, *The Dying Earth* and *The Eyes of the Overworld*; two books as exquisitely tooled as Louis XIV's crown, as alive with implied history as the cold caskets in Tutankhamen's tomb. In short, they're jewelry to be read rather than worn, and yet never too ornate or precious. They are dire books, whose picaresque heroes are charmingly self-interested. There are no selfless young princes here....

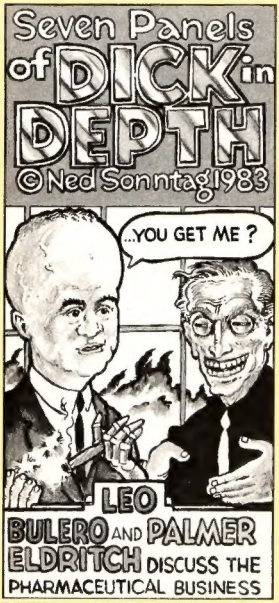
And so the opening of Vance's long-awaited epic fantasy, ***Lyonesse*** (Berkley trade pb), is a bit off-putting, both for its lack of engaging anti-heroes and in its use of a disarmingly trite plot device. A beautiful prin-

Hello, sailor! Jack Vance at the helm.
Photo by **David Alexander**

cess. Suldrun of Lyonesse, is locked away in an enchanted garden for refusing to marry a lout her father's picked for her—she's rescued from that all-too-pleasant garden by a handsome prince, Aillas of Troicinet: their love is forbidden, for Troicinet is at war with Lyonesse. Pretty hoary stuff? But like a great chess master opening the game with a disarmingly conventional move, Vance lulls us with this familiar idyll—and then sweeps us into strange, madness-haunted byways, and magic-shimmering episodes which make one imagine Jerzy Kosinski collaborating with the Brothers Grimm. Grotesqueries shamble side by side with lilting fairy-tale delicacies; bizarre episodic fables interweave with the greater fabric of epic, rendering a Hieronymous Bosch triptych in the mind's eye of the reader. And in the background, ominously approaching like a bank of dark stormclouds, the perversely oblique war between the magicians Murgen and Tamurello makes itself chillingly felt.

Vance's description is so crystalline, his prose so evocative, his storyteller's conviction so strong, we find ourselves believing against all reason in this enchanted isle—and when the tale is done, we're sorry to have to leave it.

—John Shirley


Seven Panels of DICK in DEPTH
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..YOU GET ME ?
LEO BULERO AND PALMER ELDRITCH DISCUSS THE PHARMACEUTICAL BUSINESS
THE THREE STIGMATA OF PALMER ELDRITCH

Philip K. Dick (1928-1982) reached a level of paranoia in the sixties that most of us are reaching only now! His idea of FUN was staying up all night writing these bizarre brain-twisting stories ...
OLD PRE-SCRIPTION BOTTLES
...MOZART LOUD ON THE HEADPHONES... SOMETHING FOR THE HEAD & 2 CATS TO KEEP AWAY THE PSYCHIC VAMPIRES!
FOREWORD, THE GOLDEN MAN

PRELUDE TO THE DRY SPELL
AMOS OLD HAS HAD HIS EYELIDS REMOVED, TAKES HEXO-AMPHETAMINES NEVER SLEEPS AND WORKS ON THE BIG EAR SO THE GOVERNMENT CAN READ YOUR THOUGHTS!!
OUR FRIENDS FROM FROLIK-8
MOST DISGUSTING CONCEPT Backward digestion under the Hobart Phase...
SOGUM?
SURE! I COULD GO FOR A LOAD!
COUNTER-CLOCK WORLD

SHORT AND SOFT

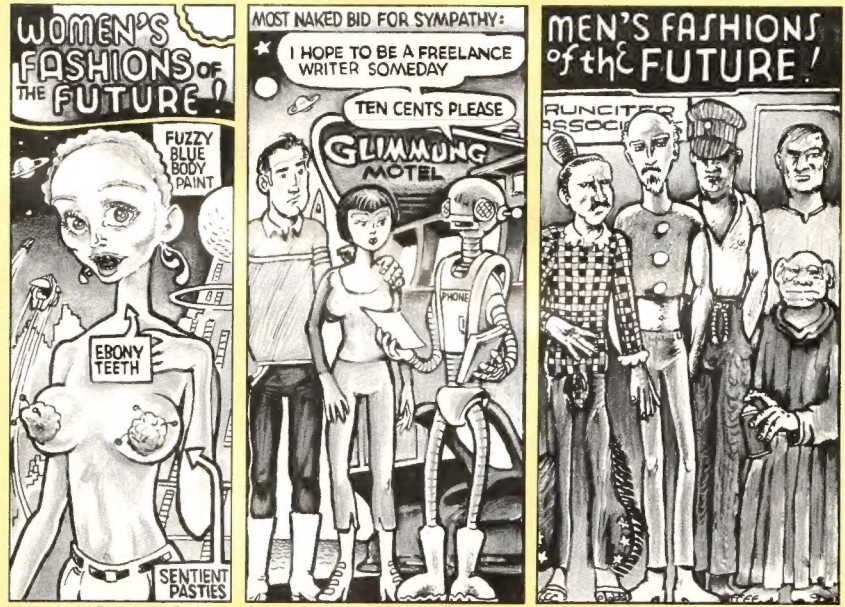
There's nothing so encouraging as wading through a pile of paperbacks and dredging up something really worth a full measure of scorn. This time I was rewarded by the most over-written and under-conceived fiction to pretentiously call itself "A novel of the future" this decade: **Stuart Gordon**'s ***Smile On the Void*** (Berkley), which got backed up somewhere and has been sitting on the pot ever since.

This is *bad* with a superiority complex, the kind of book posing as The Gospel According To Someone Who Knew the Great Man When, that has taken itself so seriously it reached right in and pulled up my lunch. One feels that Gordon wouldn't be much surprised if an underground cult did take his message to heart, maybe like Manson took *Stranger* to max. security.

A much skinnier and less obnoxious foray into religiosity is **George Alec Effinger**'s ***The Wolves of Memory*** (Berkley). At least it is well written, sensitively handled, and relies on character rather than demagoguery to make its story go.

No surer hand has ever been turned to this sort of material than the late **James Blish**'s professional and exacting prose. Avon's series of Blish reprints (including several juvies that have never appeared in paper this side of the water) is winding up in the next few months with ***Welcome to Mars***, ***Jack of Eagles***, and ***Anywhen***; minor Blish, but racing examples of magazine pacing nonetheless. But Blish's crowning achievement was the *After Such Knowledge* "trilogy" (actually four books) which includes two of the recent reprints, ***Doctor Mirabilis*** and ***Black Easter***. They are arguably his best works, though freakiest and most neurotic researches into a personality that was probably his own.

Clifford Simak has had strange ups and downs in his career. While his prose is always good and journeyman-like, some of his books just don't seem to have been written by the same pensive man who wrote *All Flesh is Grass* and the classic *City*. ***Out of Their Minds*** (Daw), committed to paper in 1970, wags psychedelic—like paisley wallpaper—starting off with a Triceratops and Snuffy Smith, ending with Sancho Panza and



the Devil, with everything else thrown willy-nilly into the middle. It piques your curiosity, but all you'll get is a headache. ***Cemetary World*** (Daw) pulls the same cute trick, this time with lethal consequences.

Doris Piserchia's ***The Deadly Sky*** (Daw) was a pleasant surprise. I'd plodded my way, lead-footed through one or two of her previous, and though the new story similarly is nothing much, something hovers on the edge of memory long after the book has been shelved. Her ability to sketch a younster's coming of age hits the spot. I'd like to see her try something more grounded in fact, and less self-consciously poetic.

In quite another vein, **Harry Harrison** has done it again; only this time he's done it badly. ***The Stainless Steel Rat For President*** (Bantam) follows *The Rat Wants You!*, *The Rat's Revenge*, and *The Rat Saves the World*: pretty Yankee Doodle from an expatriate pushme-pullyou novelist. Ever the old story; out of boredom or just plain carelessness, the satirical pundit has turned his wit on his own flanks, and even likeable Jim DiGriz (aka, The Rat) can't survive the body blow.

Philip K. Dick was the first modern sf writer to realize that the second half of the twentieth century owed no allegiance to the first. He is, without a doubt, one of the greats, however you tally the points, but sadly, his works drift in and out of print with little consistency and no fanfare. Donald A. Wolheim (Daw) was one of Dick's earliest supporters, his editor at Ace. He deserves credit for resurrecting a shelf of the writer's work, featuring the well-known, even infamous novels of Dick's drug-soaked mid-life such as ***Ubik***, the tribal psycho-paranoiac conjuring of ***The Three Stigmata of Palmer Eldritch***, and the bad wierdness of ***We Can Build You***, a dark belly-laugh excursion into the nature of sanity and foible.

—John Silbersack

SECTS AND BOOKS

DARK SIDE OF THE MOON

Most photographers have a thing about light. **Robert Mapplethorpe** has a thing about dark—dark rooms, dark leather, dark glasses, the dark side of anything, dark men, even dark light. A quintessential New York photographer, he hates the sun; says it gives him a headache. His idea of a nightmare is "lying in the sun—with a reflector." On the bright sunny day I'm interviewing him, he's got a

WOW!
THIS IS REAL ART! REAL POLITICS! THESE PEOPLE WANT US TO THINK, AND FEEL AND LAUGH ALL AT THE SAME TIME!
I LOVE MAPPLETHORPE'S GRITTY, UNSWERVING EYE, AND HOW HE MAKES PICTURES THAT ARE BOTH STARK AND DELICATE ...
LISA LYON
BY ROBERT MAPPLETHORPE
Text by
BUT BODY BUILDERS? THEY'RE NOT SO NEW ANYMORE ---
WHAT'S THE BIG DEAL?
LYON IS THE BIG DEAL, AND IT'S NOT JUST ABOUT HAVING COCONUT DELTS OR A GUT LIKE A WASHBOARD. SHE DELIBERATELY CHOSE NOT TO CONFORM TO THE DICTATES OF THE BODY BUILDING COMMUNITY BECAUSE SHE WAS MORE INTERESTED IN COMMUNICATING. SHE CHOOSES TO SHOCK, AND SHE'S BEEN CRITICIZED FOR IT. BUT SHE DOES IT IN SUCH A PERSONAL WAY THAT WHAT COULD EASILY BE A MERE MANIFESTO OF CLICHED FEMISMO BECOMES INSTEAD THE MOST MODERN, HUMANE AND CHALLENGING TYPE OF ARTISTIC GESTURE... FOR ANYONE WHO LOOKS AT THESE PICTURES.
CAN'T YOU SEE, DUMMY? THE 'LADY' CARES.
THAT'S NOT ALL, EITHER.
THROUGH THE ENTIRE OUTRAGEOUS SPECTRUM OF THEIR SHARED IMAGERY, THESE TWO ARTISTS SUGGEST THAT WHEN WE'RE NOT STRUGGLING AS ADULTS TO STAY CONNECTED IN A DISCONNECTED WORLD, WE CAN PLAY LIKE CHILDREN, AND THAT WHATEVER PHYSICAL STRENGTH WE POSSESS, WE MUST TEMPER IT WITH HUMOR, AWARENESS, AND A SENSE OF WONDER.
LIKE, THERE'S MORE TO MUSCLE BEACH THAN PUMPING IRON, YA KNOW?
Mary Wilshire © 1983
BESIDES, WHAT'S WRONG WITH PUMPING IRON? WANNA SEE ME FLEX MY SADDLEBAG?
GROSS ME BACK TO THE STONE AGE !!!

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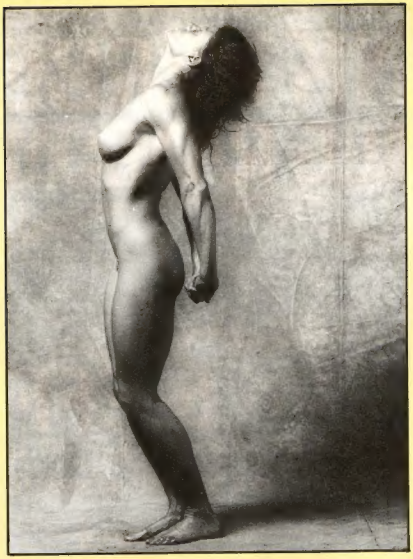
leather jacket, jeans, cowboy boots, shades, and refuses to leave his hermetic studio. It'd be easy to write him off as another extreme urban counterculture type, whose purposeful bohemia is as much an attempt at limelight as a Hollywood starlet's.

But then, most well-known photographers have some sort of gimmick—Turbeville's fashiony violence, Avedon's stark simple portraits, Helmut Newton's fancy hetero S&M, Arbus's freaks. Contrary to what his persona or pictures might indicate, about gimmicks, Mapplethorpe couldn't give a fuck. Actually, that's pretty much all he *does* give. Although his notorious black and white photographs—mostly of males, mostly black, mostly nude—have been described as fetishistic, pornographic, and artistic, he's never thought of them as high art or even social commentary. Mapplethorpe simply—and I can't think of a more direct relationship between artist and subject—*gets off on* his subject matter, and usually only takes pictures of subjects he gets off on. "I still say sex is the most important thing," he admits not at all reluctantly. "I'd never take another picture again, rather than not have sex. A lot of artists sublimate their sexuality for work. It's pathetic to hide behind a camera and not have it in your life."

Mapplethorpe grew up normally on Long Island, but had his eyes opened, as they say, when as a teenager he stumbled upon Forty Second Street. The place had an incredible impact on him, and he began to document what some would call the seamier side of New York life—S&M parlors, gay bar back rooms, etc. At the time, he was living with poet/rocker Patti Smith, and both were on their way to becoming counter-culture icons. Mapplethorpe's models, he claims, came quite willingly, and the resultant photos have an unequaled brutal beauty. Mapplethorpe claims he never set up shots—that all his early subjects (his repertoire now includes commercial high fashion work and his own studies of flowers, which for him possess a "weird sexuality") were men who simply delighted in pain for pleasure's sake (even one subject who particularly got off having his cock cut). "I like to think someone would have an orgasm over one of my pictures—I mean, that's the desire underlying everything, isn't it?"

That's Lisa Lyon and Robert Mapplethorpe behind those Foster Grants.
Photo © Robert Mapplethorpe

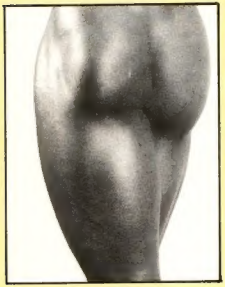
Mapplethorpe is easily verbal about his sexual preoccupations, and it's that acceptance of himself, and nature, that make his work transcend the pornographic. But he was not always the darling of the art world, as he is now. The critics wrote him off as trash until a few years ago; even gay publications were shocked at his unflinching eye. Most of his



A graphite-covered Lisa Lyon flexes, in a shot not used in *Lady*.
Photo © Robert Mapplethorpe

new work is simple nudes of black men ("I love blacks—maybe 'cause I love contrast"), which Mapplethorpe might show as his next exhibition—the catalogue of which will be laid out like a skin magazine. He's also working on a photo-portrait of his friend Jack, which will take some sort of book form with the appropriately New York street/flip title *Black Jack*.

Robert Mapplethorpe's favorite subject: hot-crossed-buns.
Photo © Robert Mapplethorpe



So Mapplethorpe's recent book of photos with woman bodybuilder **Lisa Lyon** (***Lady***, Viking) is a bit uncharacteristic. But then, so's Lisa, a both muscular and beautiful woman who finds herself in the midst of a sport, which, as she says, "is meant for black men" (this may be the root of the Mapplethorpe involvement). With Lisa, he gets to play with the concept of "lady"-like behavior ("lady" is also street slang for cocaine)—there are shots of Lisa in high fashion couture, in leather S&M gear, nude flexing her well amassed muscles in the gym, lying nude on a slab, dressed as a little girl. Consistently, they are all starkly simple in contrast to their subject matter, practically classic in composition, and the poses are surprisingly formal—like all of Mapplethorpe's work. Herein lies the real contrast. I wouldn't call *Lady* pornographic, though some of the pictures are very violent (a nude Lisa pointing a gun at her chest)—there's too much in them. Then, for Mapplethorpe, who's been nicknamed "the shy pornographer," what is pornography?...Not an issue.

—Merle Ginsberg

ABERRANT TEXANS AND JEWISH ARMADILLOS

It's often been said that the three greatest men of the last hundred years were Einstein, Marx, and Freud—all three Jews. What a depressing exaggeration that is. After all, their contributions to mankind included the Atom Bomb, Communism, and head shrinking. But there are only two heroes in my book: Hank Williams and Groucho Marx. Now, ol' Hank wasn't Jewish, but his songwriting partner and pal Fred Rose was. There's your karmic connection.

The spirit of Hank and Groucho can be found intact in the songs and singing of **Richard "Kinky" Friedman**—a man born in Rio Duckworth, Texas when Auschwitz was just a rumor. After a stint in the Peace Corps, where he introduced the frisbee to the natives of Borneo, Kinky emerged in the early seventies with one of the decade's finest albums: *Sold American*, by Friedman and the Texas Jewboys. He mixed black humor with country music in such songs as "The Ballad of Charles Whitman" (an ode to the Texas Tower sniper), and "We Reserve the Right to Refuse Service to You," a tale of anti-semitism. Jewish/Texas consciousness had found its niche in Southwestern folklore.

The Kinkster has just released a new album, ***Under the Double Ego*** (Sunrise),

Kinky Friedman: Do they make kosher cigars in Texas?

which contains his best material since *Sold American*. While as topically incisive as the first LP, it's also less caustic. Kinky sympathetically understands what it's like to be an American in 1983—his songs "The Take-It-Easy Trailer Park" (written with Van Dyke Parks), and "People Who Read *People* Magazine" reveal a kinship with the American dreamer free of the usual corn and jingoism. For those who like Randy

Superman (Christopher Reeve) speed-reading.

Newman *and* Merle Haggard. I recommend *Under the Double Ego*.

If you like what is often called "progressive country" or "redneck rock," check out **Rank and File**'s debut LP, ***Sundown*** (Slash). Comprised of ex-members of several popular late-seventies, west-coast punk bands (including the Dils and the Nuns), this Austin group's sound is a guitar-heavy mix of twangs and whooshes, reminiscent of a hard-rocking Byrds with eerily bizarre chant-like vocals. It's something like Fellini jamming with Johnny Cash at CBGB's.

—Michael Simmons

(Slash Records, P.O. Box 48888, LA, CA 90048; Sunrise Records, P.O. Box 9157, Austin, TX 78766)

SEE THE MOVIE, PLAY THE GAME

Recruiting new writing talent for the next *Star Wars* movie.

Photo by **Ralph Nelson, Jr.**

What's a summer sf or space-adventure movie without a corresponding video-game? With the repetition of formula action and sequel plots, and the elimination of provocative ideas from story lines, high-and-low budget special-fx hardware epics have reduced the sf film experience to byte-sized kill-or-be-wiped-out video-game combat. Catching the serial resolution ***Return of the Jedi*** (with Darth Vader pop-ing up as Luke Skywalker's daddy, and enough fuzzy-wuzzy, guerilla-fighter Muppet clones to wallpaper several galaxies) at your shopping center cineplex is only half the fun of this year's *Star Wars* merchandising. The other half is going directly to a **Jedi Adventure Center** at 250 selected malls to play **Jedi Arena**. Object: destroy the Death Star by launching a proton torpedo. (And what happened to returning freedom to the Galactic Empire?) Vocal reward from Obi-Wan Kenobi: "Remember, the Force will be with you, always."

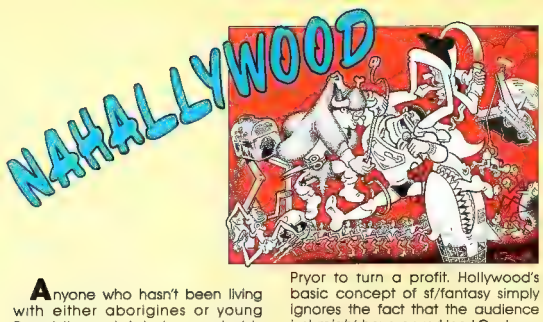
Like his hero Walt Disney, whose innovations in animation disintegrated into Sunday School sermons, *Star Wars* wizard George Lucas is a propagandist bent on proliferating Force-fed LucasThink. Devoid of vigorous mental challenges and visually dazzling space encounters, *Return of the Jedi* regurgitates Lucas's divinely revealed anti-fascism, faith in the triumph of good tech over evil mech, and the quixotic notion that the universe can be saved from human stupidity. Since entering the video-game business, TV-bred entrepreneur Lucas is reported to be toying with the final celluloid solution: computer films that don't require actors or directors.

Continuing down the hit-list of this summer's vid-game movies, ***Superman III*** snores rather than soars. The Man of Steel's heralded feats of killer heat vision and the movie's hollow slapstick are about as stimulating as a game of Superman pinball. Lavish sets can't control the middle-age sag in James Bond's thirteenth escapade, ***Octopussy***. The 007 video game of spys and broads vs. power-mad megalomaniacs is tailor-made for the discarded parents of arcade addicts. And the movie and video game of the outer space sword and sorcery frolic ***Krull*** are as exciting as a medieval drag ball in an asteroid field.

WarGames, however, wins this year's award for the sf-eve-of-destruction film with ideas (and Communist conspiracy paranoia). It's the only computer flick with a moral: the futility and insanity of nuclear war, and its tic-tac-toe computer battle of wits is the game I'd most like to play.

Let's hope a plague descends on desensitizing, binary programmed sf-flicks. Instead of returning the Jedi, let's innaugurate an sf and future-fantasy movie renaissance where the unknown, fantastic, surreal, and impossible mix and match with intelligent aliens, experimental astro-physics, and metaphysical suppositions about what we are here for and where we are—or are not—going. More wildly imaginative Philip K. Dick, *Videodrome*, and *The Man Who Fell to Earth*-type flicks, and fewer customized space opera westerns—or, the next generation of movie-makers will turn out to be like the twelve-year-old boy at the Harvard Graduate School of Education's conference on learning and video-games. "On TV and movies, if you want to make someone die, you can't," he explained when asked why he preferred playing video games to watching TV and movies. So much for the conference's B.S. that "video-games improve hand-eye coordination, develop inductive reasoning, and stimulate learning how to handle multiple variables that interact simultaneously" —as in bleep-bleep, you're dead.

—Daphne Davis



Anyone who hasn't been living with either aborigines or young Republicans lately has probably noticed that Hollywood is in love with sf/fantasy/horror films. There are big bucks to be made in escapist films, and producers have been tripping over themselves to get genre movies into production.

They lavish millions of dollars on special effects.

They shoot in studios large enough to house small countries.

They hire top-notch casts and crews.

So why then, can't they spend a little time developing *stories* for the epics they're filming?

I don't know about you, but I'm getting sick and tired of sitting through films that cost between $15 and $30 million, and have all the emotional wallop of a string of firecrackers. Apparently, when it comes to science fiction and fantasy, nobody thinks in terms of story. I can almost see those meetings held in ferny studio offices.

Mogul #1: "Hey, summer's coming around. All those kids will be out of school. Let's make a science-fiction film!"

Mogul #2: "Great! We can get Lucas's people for effects. Maybe Harrison Ford can star. Spielberg's cousin's babysitter just graduated from UCLA, so he can direct. We're all set."

Mogul #1: "Uh, how about the story?"

Mogul #2: "Story? Story? We'll worry about that when the time comes."

The problem is, that "the time" doesn't seem to come up too often. Plots so anemic that most of the current crop of genre movies could easily qualify for free medical care is infuriating enough, but even worse is that—no matter how bozoid—these films all make money. Why? Advertising. Gimmickry. Loyalty.

For instance, all loyal Superman fans will flock to see ***Superman III***, despite a script apparently fashioned by feeding several old Superman comics into a veg-o-matic, and a reliance on prayer and Richard Pryor to turn a profit. Hollywood's basic concept of sf/fantasy simply ignores the fact that the audience just *might* have a working I.Q. above that of your average Jerry Lewis fan (sorry, all you Parisians).

Back in the fifties, when sf moviedom was considered teenage-idiot fodder, and titles like *I Married a Monster from Outer Space* and *I Was A Teenage Frankenstein* appeared every other minute, you at least had movies like *The Incredible Shrinking Man*, *Them*, and *The Day The Earth Stood Still* to sink your teeth into. But original or even timely concepts are hard to find in the 1980s' flicks. The adage today seems to be: when in doubt, borrow. George Lucas elevated the practice to an artform a few years back with *Star Wars*; and millions of dollars later, he seems content to borrow from himself in ***Return of the Jedi*** sort of a *Star Wars' Merchandising's Greatest Hits* collection. ("See all your fave characters, living or dead! No sweat! If they're dead, we'll just give 'em a day-glo sheen!")

Today's hit movies are derivative to the point of exasperation. *Jedi*'s plot was standard Buster Crabbe jungle adventure ("cept they don't have pygmies in the Jedi jungle—just teddy bears with pygmy lips), and the crucial story developments were revealed in lines like: "Luke, I am your sister." Or: "Luke, I am your father!" Or: "Luke, I'm the guy who used to shine your uncle's light sabre!"

Psycho II relied on the same sort of story twists ("Norman, I'm your mother!" "Norman, I'm a guy who's going to get killed just like Martin Balsam in that other *Psycho* movie!"), but combined them with quasi-bimbo E.C. Comics humor, and then tried to pass itself off as an affectionate, intellectual homage to the Hitchcock original. To quote the learned philosopher, Curly Howard: "Nyuk, nyuk, nyuk."

The Twilight Zone was nice in a peewee league kind of way, although it effectively reduced Serling's often thought-provoking realm into a mere rollercoaster ride. (You know: *Booo!* Wheee! Ain't this something? Haw, haw.) ***Krull*** managed to take an average Errol Flynn plot and amplify it into an average Luke Skywalker plot ***Spacehunter*** proved itself a 3-D tribute to mass illiteracy. (Be the first one on *your* block to figure out *why* this movie was made!) ***Jaws 3-D*** seemed to be made for the halibut, and Lou Ferrigno, in ***Hercules***, effectively elevated Steve Reeves to John Gielgud status.

Let's face it, gang, for every *E.T.* or *WarGames* there are a dozen *Xtro*'s and *Halloween III*'s. Nobody in filmmaking cares about what these movies can offer aside from visuals. Like when the $20 + million *Star Trek: The Motion Picture* was being made, the entire cast and crew would hang around the stage waiting for new script pages to trickle down from the mimeograph room. (Story? Story?) And this year, the Disney studio (who gave new meaning to the word *imbecilic* with such classics as *Tron* and *The Black Hole*) spent millions of dollars on post-production effects to spruce up ***Something Wicked This Way Comes***, and then wound up scrapping half of them.

Not only are most of the new sf scripts knucklebrained, but worse, they rely on ripping off other knucklebrains for plot development. So until we start seeing classy sf-fantasy on the screen again (keep your fingers crossed for ***Return to Oz***, David Lynch's ***Dune***, and Walter Hill's ***Streets of Fire***), may I suggest that producers start ripping off *other* genre for their stories? You know, instead of plagiarizing *Road Warrior/Star Warsian* action for *Spacehunter*, why not glom some Truffaut? Instead of refitting *Hercules*, why not redress *Tootsie*?

And so, in the *true* spirit of Hollywood take-a-meeting creativity, I'd like to present my personal choices for the 1984 summer megabuck monster hit movie list.

Conan the Furrier: The first ethnic sword and sorcery film finds Sid Conan (a.k.a. Conanski) searching the Bronx for the symbol of his power: a lost monogrammed needle and thread kit. Conan (Richard Dreyfuss), finds himself trapped in the condo of his arch rival King Murray (Sid Caesar, with the voice of James Earl Jones) and his wife, Queen Blanche (Lainie Kazan). Conan knows he's in trouble when he hears the King intone, "So, Conan. Sit. Talk to me. Have a little tea. You remember Blanche's sister Bernice, don't you? She's a regular princess!"

Gandhi 2000: He's lean. He's mean. He's a pacifist fighting machine. He's Biff Gandhi (David Carradine), great-great-grandson of The Man. In this first of a proposed series, Biff agrees to help a caravan of aging race car drivers through the Forbidden Area:

a desolate strip in the midwest populated by Shriners (led by guest star, Marlon Brando, with the voice of James Earl Jones). Watch for the climactic duel wherein Gandhi and rival Shriner Bob (Chuck Norris) pummel each other with rice cakes from a distance of twenty paces.

WarDance: A speculative musical. Meade, a teenage anthropology expert (Matt Dillon) discovers that by reprogramming dance club tapes with ancient Hopi Indian chants, he can cause thousands of teenagers to don warpaint and chase Conestoga wagons. A government agent (Dabney Coleman, with the voice of James Earl Jones) wants the tapes for the Defense Department. He kidnaps Meade's girlfriend (Irene Cara, or someone just like her) and makes her sing for her supper. Unfortunately, everything she sings sounds like the theme song of *Fame*, and the man is bored to death.

Jaws In Golden Pond: Family-horror. Lloyd Bridges plays the head of a family of scuba divers whose underwater reunion is interrupted by the arrival of a large shark. A local scientist (Bruce Dern) dissuades Bridges from killing the creature, vowing to communicate with the animal via charades. He succeeds. The shark's message (in the voice of James Earl Jones) is, "Two words: I'm hungry."

The Towaway Zone: Fantasy-tourism. Four tales of tourist terror as a quartet of families visit New York City and unwittingly park in the eerie Towaway Zone. Horror, frustration, and large fines result. (Although director Steven Spielberg's episode ends happily, with the family not only getting their car back but the arresting officer apologizing for being born.)

Spacepug: Adventures In the Punchdrunk Zone: High-flying fisticuffs. Rocky Balboa (Sylvester Stallone) stows away aboard a space shuttle filled with stewardesses. The shuttle goes out of control and lands on the planet Redux I, a world populated by plot twists left over from 1950s' sf films. Facing a giant puppet spider, Rocky seems doomed until his long dead trainer (Burgess Meredith) suddenly reappears as a rotoscoped lava lamp. "Remember my teaching," says the spirit. "Below the belt! Below the belt!" Also featuring Alec Guinness as the ghost of John L. Sullivan, and Mr. T. as loyal robot 1-2-Combo.

Superman 4, Audience 0: Slapstick-adventure. In this laff-riot, Superman (Chris Reeve) swallows some kryptonite-laced Bosco (the voice of James Earl Jones) and turns into a standup comic (Richard Pryor). Unable to change himself back, the new super comic earns big dollars by acting in films beneath his dignity. Featuring Marlon Brando as the planet Earth, and Margot Kidder as the girl who got fired.

Receipts of the Jedi: Financial-fantasy. In this surprise sequel, Luke (Mark Hamill) is trapped in a department store after closing time and assailed by high-priced memories of his past. "Luke, I am your *Jedi* lunchbox!" "Luke, I am your *Jedi* thermos!" "Luke, I am your official, authorized, sanctioned, guaranteed not to corrode, *Jedi* jammies!" Meanwhile Yoda vows to teach dyslexics how to talk funny.

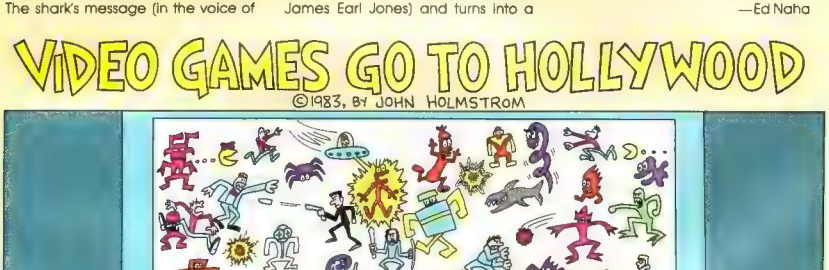
An Unmarried, Sensitive Psycho: Slice-of-life drama. Alan Alda plays a wise, witty, gentle-without-being-wimpy, strong, decisive, understanding, caring, cheerful, optimistic, clever, literate, self-assured, college-educated, upwardly mobile, supportive, well-adjusted mass murderer. On his first big date, he is shot to death by undercover cop Nikki (Jill Clayburgh) Featuring Ernest Borgnine as "The Desk Sergeant," Shelley Winters as "The Desk," and James Earl Jones as the voice of Christmas past.

I know *I* can't wait. Can you?

—Ed Naha

VIDEO GAMES GO TO HOLLYWOOD

©1983, BY JOHN HOLMSTROM



MOVIES HAVE BEEN SPINNING OFF A LOT OF VIDEO GAMES LATELY. IN VIDEO'S PREHISTORIC ERA -- OR B.S.! (BEFORE SPACE INVADERS, CIRCA 1979) -- THERE WERE A PACK OF JAWS-INSPIRED GAMES. SOON AFTER SCIENCE-FICTION GAMES WERE CASHING IN ON THE SUCCESS OF **STAR WARS** SINCE THEN, MORE AND MORE MANUFACTURERS HAVE TRIED TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF MOVIES' BOX OFFICE SUCCESSES BY PRODUCING GAME SPINOFFS-- DISCOVERING THAT THERE'S NO CORRELATION BETWEEN A MOVIE'S SUCCESS AND A VIDEO GAME'S EARNINGS.

BALLY/MIDWAY'S ARCADE GAME **TRON** HAS SCORED THE BIGGEST FINANCIAL SUCCESS OF ALL SPINOFFS, EVEN THOUGH THE MOVIE THAT INSPIRED IT WAS A FLOP ON THE OTHER HAND, **E.T.**, THE ALL-TIME MONEYMAKER ($350 MILLION AT LAST COUNT) BOMBED AS AN ATARI HOME CARTRIDGE, IN SPITE OF A HUGE PROMOTIONAL CAMPAIGN.

KRULL IS ONE OF THE LATEST CINEMATIC VIDEO GAMES. THE STORY OF THE MOVIE IS TOLD IN FIVE DIFFERENT GAME SCREENS. IN THE FIRST, COLWYN THE HERO (AND THE PLAYER) COLLECTS HIS WEAPON (THE GLAIVE) DURING AN AVALANCHE. IN THE SECOND AND THIRD SCENARIOS, HE GATHERS HIS TROOPS WHILE KILLING THE "SLAYER" MONSTERS AND LEADS HIS LEGION TO THE "HEXAGON." IN THE FOURTH SCREEN, YOU (COLWYN) SHOOT DOWN THE HEXAGON'S WALLS. FINALLY, YOU RESCUE THE PRINCESS LYSSA FROM THE BEAST WHILE DODGING HIS FIREBALLS. OVERALL, IT'S A LOT LIKE **ROBOTRON**.

KRULL'S STRONGEST FEATURE IS IT'S SOUNDTRACK -- RELENTLESS PSYCHEDELIC, HEAVY METAL BOOM-BOOM. THE GRAPHICS, THOUGH, ARE CLUTTERED AND BUSY, MAKING IT DIFFICULT TO PLAY.

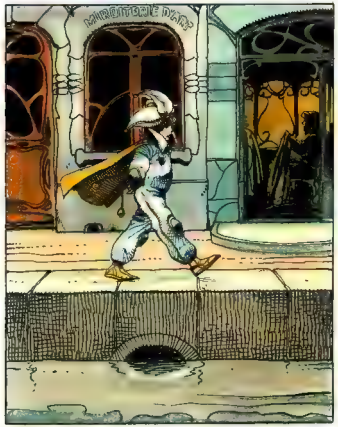
THERE'S MORE WHERE **KRULL** CAME FROM. ATARI'S **JEDI ARENA**, WHICH WAS SUPPOSED TO BE RELEASED AT THE SAME TIME AS **THE RETURN OF THE JEDI**, IS IN THE ARCADES NOW AFTER A SHORT DELAY PARKER BROTHERS IS RELEASING A **JAMES BOND** HOME GAME **WAR GAMES** REPORTEDLY COMMANDED A WHOPPING $1 MILLION FROM COLECO FOR HOME GAME LICENSING RIGHTS. ALSO OUT ARE **SPACEHUNTER** AND **EMPIRE STRIKES BACK** CARTRIDGES.

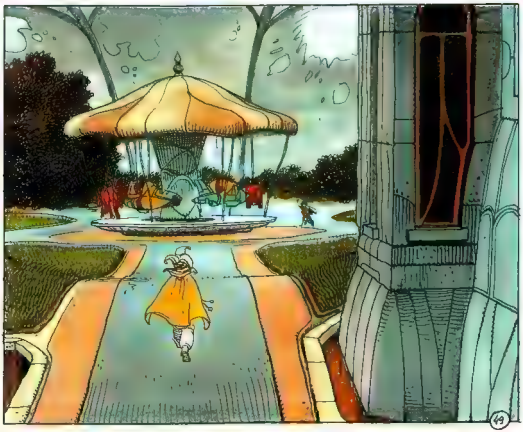
OBVIOUSLY, A HIT MOVIE WON'T INSURE A GOOD VIDEO GAME, BUT AS ARCADE SPACE FOR NEW GAMES IS AT A PREMIUM AND THE HOME MARKET IS SATURATED, MANUFACTURERS ARE LOOKING FOR ANY EDGE THEY CAN GET. IF YOU'RE GONNA SPEND A MILLION BUCKS TO LICENSE A MOVIE'S IDENTITY, THOUGH, DOESN'T IT MAKE SENSE TO SPEND JUST AS MUCH IN TIME AND MONEY TO COME UP WITH A GOOD GAME?

-JOHN HOLMSTROM

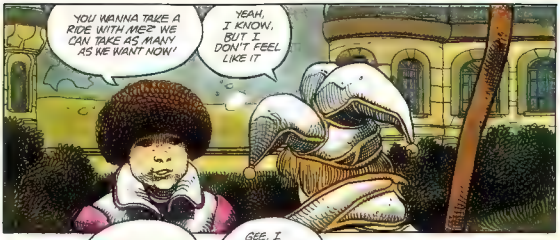
The City That Didn't Exist
by P. Christin and Enki Bilal

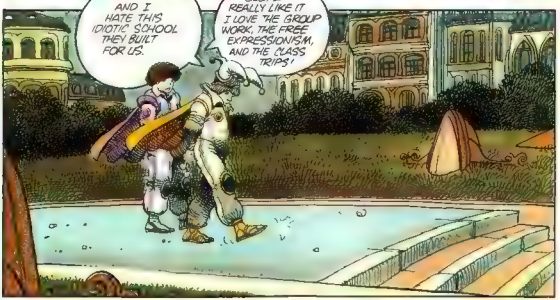
LAST WE READ, THE TOWNSPEOPLE MOVED INTO THEIR NEWLY BUILT UTOPIA WHERE NONE OF THEM HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT POVERTY, HEALTH, OR EDUCATION. BUT THERE WERE STILL THOSE FEW PEOPLE WHO PREFERRED THE OLD WAYS.



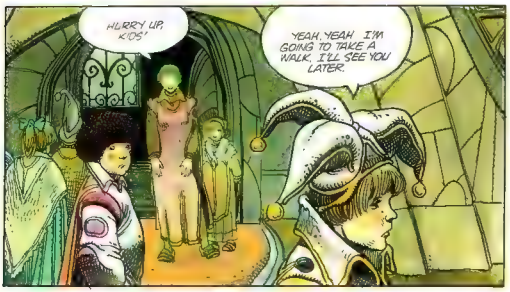


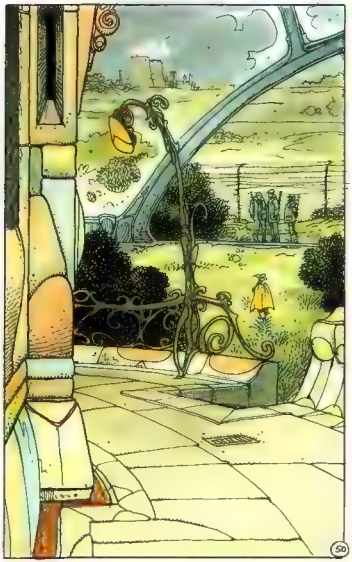
HI, PAUL!
HI, FREDDY!


YOU WANNA TAKE A RIDE WITH ME? WE CAN TAKE AS MANY AS WE WANT NOW!
YEAH, I KNOW, BUT I DON'T FEEL LIKE IT


AND I HATE THIS IDIOTIC SCHOOL THEY BUILT FOR US.
GEE, I REALLY LIKE IT I LOVE THE GROUP WORK, THE FREE EXPRESSIONISM, AND THE CLASS TRIPS!

YEAH, I DO, TOO. I GUESS IT WAS THAT DREAM I HAD LAST NIGHT THAT'S BOTHERING ME.
MY FATHER WAS IN IT.
AND SO, WHAT HAPPENED? DIDN'T HE SPLIT?


HURRY UP, KIDS!
YEAH, YEAH I'M GOING TO TAKE A WALK. I'LL SEE YOU LATER.

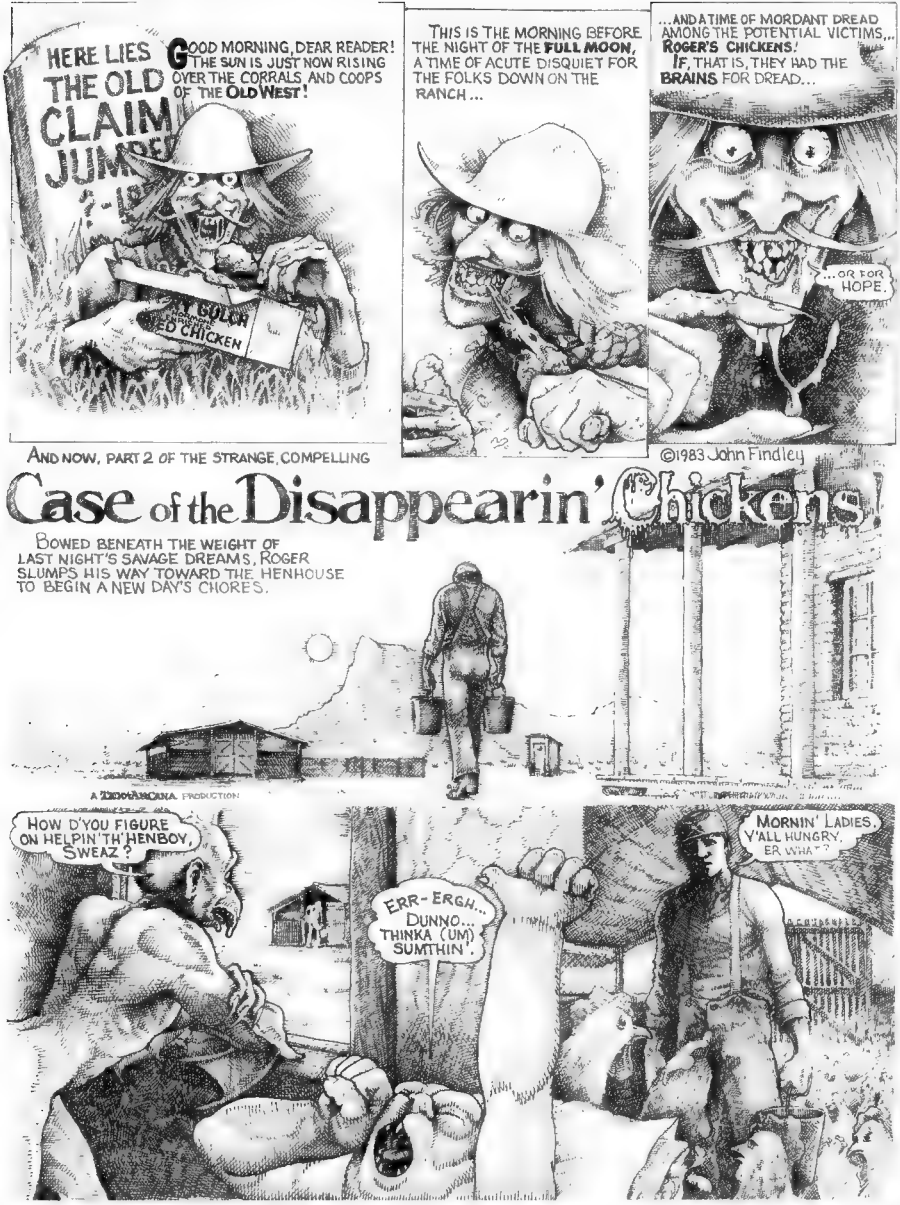

50

SORRY, LITTLE ONE, WE CAN'T LET YOU OUT
I GUESS YOU HAVEN'T HEARD. THE CITY HAS BEEN CLOSED EVER SINCE THOSE BASTARDS FROM THE OUTSIDE TRIED TO COME IN AND STEAL OUR STUFF.
YEAH, THERE WAS THIS ONE GUY WHO WANTED TO EXPLODE EVERYTHING!
GEE, I DIDN'T KNOW THAT.
HELLO, PAUL!
OH HELLO, LOU-LOU! WHERE ARE YOU GOING WITH YOUR PACK?
WELL, UH I'M GETTING OUT OF HERE!
WILL YOU TAKE ME WITH YOU?
WELL, FRANKLY, WITH ALL THESE DAMNED GUARDS AROUND HERE I CAN'T EVEN FIND THE EXIT AND BESIDES, WHAT WOULD YOUR MOTHER SAY?
SHE'S HAPPY HERE, AS ARE MY BROTHERS AND SISTER. BUT I WANT TO SEE MY FATHER
SORTIE
51

GOODBYE, THE CITY HAS BEEN BUILT. YOU DON'T NEED ME NOW.
GOD GRANT THAT YOU ARE RIGHT.
HELLO!
HELLO!
HELLO!
GOODBYE, LUCIEN.
GOODBYE, SIR. MAYBE WE'LL MEET AGAIN ON THE OUTSIDE SOMETIME. I HAVE BEEN PLANNING TO OPEN A CATERING PLACE OF MY OWN. BUT INITIATIVE ISN'T VERY IMPORTANT AROUND HERE NOW.
WHERE ARE YOU TWO GOING?
BAH! I CAN'T PUT UP WITH THIS ANYMORE. I KNOW I FOUGHT HARD FOR EVERYTHING WE HAVE HERE, BUT I DIDN'T EXPECT IT TO END UP THIS WAY.
THIS PERMANENT PARTY IS GETTING TO BE A REAL BORE. EVERYONE PRETENDS THAT IT'S ALL PERFECT, BUT EVERYONE IS BORED STIFF. WE HAVE ALL BEEN CLOISTERED UNDER THIS DAMNED DOME FOR TOO LONG.
AND THERE'S HER. ER, EXCUSE ME, OKAY? . BUT SHE LOOKS DOWN ON US LIKE WE ARE ASSETS, TO SEE IF EVERYTHING SPINS AROUND AS IT SHOULD. I JUST CAN'T STAND IT ANY-MORE
92

DO YOU KNOW HOW TO LEAVE?
AND MY FATHER, DO YOU KNOW WHERE HE IS?
FOLLOW ME
LOOK!
PAPA!
AH, LOULOU! YOU HAVE COME, TOO!
YEAH, I HAVE HAD ENOUGH WITH THIS IDEAL CITY! IT AMAZES ME THAT A LOT OF OUR FRIENDS HAVE FALLEN FOR THIS BULL
BAH! THAT CITY DOESN'T EXIST AND IT NEVER WILL. ONE CAN'T HIDE BETWEEN THE PARENTHESES OF THE WORLD, MY FRIEND.
AND YOU? WHAT HAVE YOU BEEN DOING?
WELL, I'VE BEEN WORKING NIGHTS AT A LOCAL PAPER. WELL IT'S A DIRTY LITTLE PLACE, BUT I'VE JUST STARTED UP A UNION--IT'S THE FIRST IN FIFTY YEARS. CAN YOU BELIEVE THAT?
DO YOU THINK I CAN GET A JOB AT YOUR PLACE?
53

WHY? SO YOU CAN RUIN EVERYTHING WITH YOUR TALK OF SHITTY UTOPIAS? YOU'VE GOT TO BE KIDDING!
BUT A PAPER FACTORY! MAYBE WE CAN START UP A LITTLE FUNNY NEWSPAPER FOR NOT TOO MUCH AND THEN, WHO KNOWS..?
NO, I AM GOING TO LEAVE
FOR WHERE? WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
WHO KNOWS? THAT WAY, I GUESS. I WANT TO SEE THE CITY ONE MORE TIME... EVEN IF IT DOESN'T EXIST.
AND THEN, I SEE, IT'S STARTING UP ALL OVER AGAIN! COME ON, LET'S GO FOR A DRINK AND WE CAN DISCUSS IT
PAPA? CAN I GO FISHING?
OF COURSE, SON. OF COURSE AND YOU? YOU'RE NOT GOING BACK, EITHER?
END
STORY: P. CHRISTIN
ART: ENKI BILAL


HERE LIES THE OLD CLAIM JUM
GOOD MORNING, DEAR READER! THE SUN IS JUST NOW RISING OVER THE CORRALS AND COOPS OF THE OLD WEST!
THIS IS THE MORNING BEFORE THE NIGHT OF THE FULL MOON, A TIME OF ACUTE DISQUIET FOR THE FOLKS DOWN ON THE RANCH...
...AND A TIME OF MORDANT DREAD AMONG THE POTENTIAL VICTIMS... ROGER'S CHICKENS! IF, THAT IS, THEY HAD THE BRAINS FOR DREAD...
...OR FOR HOPE.
AND NOW, PART 2 OF THE STRANGE, COMPELLING
©1983 John Findley
Case of the Disappearin' Chickens!
BOWED BENEATH THE WEIGHT OF LAST NIGHT'S SAVAGE DREAMS, ROGER SLUMPS HIS WAY TOWARD THE HENHOUSE TO BEGIN A NEW DAY'S CHORES.
A TEDDY BEAR CANA PRODUCTION
HOW D'YOU FIGURE ON HELPIN' TH' HENBOY, SWEAZ?
ERR-ERGH... DUNNO... THINKA (UM) SUMTHIN'.
MORNIN' LADIES, Y'ALL HUNGRY, ER WHAT?

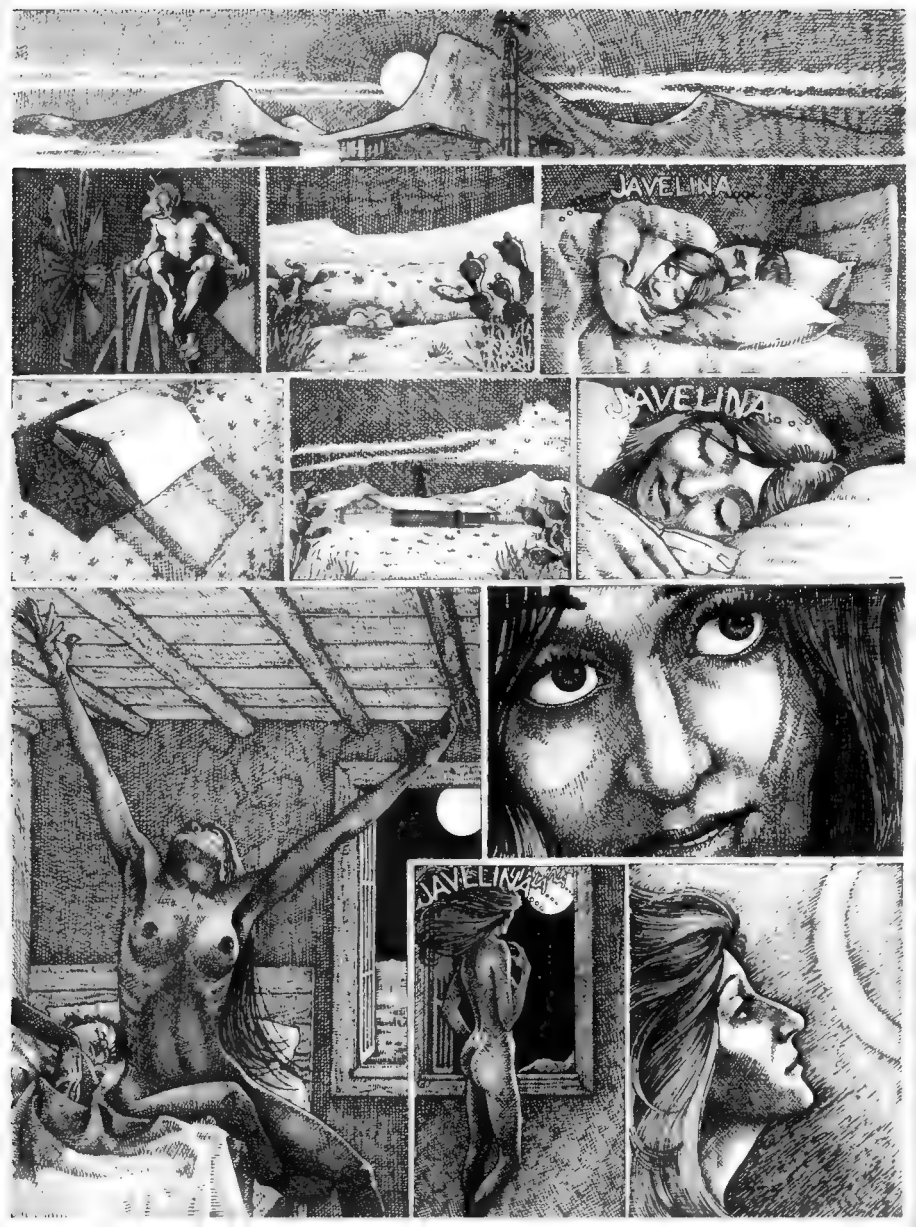
♩♩♩...
♩♩...
GOOD MORNING, SMALL-FRIENDS-WITH-ODD-FACES.
I HOPE YOU LIKE THESE THINGS. ROGER HAS NOT TOLD ME YOUR WAYS OF EATING.
OH, WE EAT EV...UH, JUST ABOUT ANYTHING!
THIS IS FINE, MA'AM, THANK YOU.
MORNIN', LI'L FELLERS!
SO...TELL ME, ON THESE FULL MOON NIGHTS, WHEN THE CHICKENS DISAPPEAR, DOESN'T ANYONE KEEP A LOOKOUT?
BUT WHEN TH' MOON'S LIGHT HITS US WE GIT SO SLEEPY, OUR EYES JUS' WON'T STAY OPEN AN' THAT'S ALL SHE WROTE.
WE TRY. EVER' TIME WE TRY. WE SIT BY TH' WINDOW TRYIN' T' CATCH TH' THIEF...
HOW D'YA EXPLAIN THAT?
YA FIGGER IT'S, MAYBE, SOME KINDA LIKE... SPELL?
UM...LINA... EGGS?
MY LOVE, WE HAVE GUESTS!

AND LATER THIS SAME MORNING SOME OF THE CITIZENS OF HANGMAN'S CORNERS ARE GATHERED AT THE NOOSE & GIBBET SALOON...
THAT AIN'T RIGHT LORD GOD!!
SURE IT IS. LOOKA HERE
HE GOT TH OTHER ONE PERFICT, BUT HE'S HAVIN TROUBLE WITH THIS ONE
MAKE THAT THERE THING ROUNDER
HE WERE SCARIER LOOKIN THAN THAT, PETE
THAT WOULDN' SCARE MY OL' GRANNY
HM.
BLAMED IF I KIN SEE WHY TH' SHERIFF WANTS 'EM BACK.
I SAY GOOD RIDDANCE.
WELL, THEY NEVER DID HURT NOBODY, AN' I THINK THEY WAS CUTE.. KINDA
I FEEL RIGHT SORRY FER DEPUTY CALLAHAN BUT I RECKON HE FLAT SCREWED UP.
HE AN' THAT BOTTLE BEEN DOWN AT THE END O' THE BAR SINCE I OPENED UP THIS MORNIN'.
I'M GLAD HE LET 'EM GO! DIDN'T NOBODY HAVE NO BUSINESS PUTTIN' 'EM IN JAIL IN TH' FIRST PLACE!
HIS BEAK WERE SOFT... LIKE A NOSE.
THIS HERE WAS A LITTLE FLAT FIN THANG!
AN' DIDJA NOTICE? THIS ONE ONLY HAD, YOU KNOW, FOUR FINGERS STEAD O' FIVE ON HIS HANDS!
WELL, IT'S A LITTLE TOO... CHICKEN LOOKIN', YA KNOW?
HE WERE A UGLY CRITTER BUT PETTER LOOKIN' THAN THAT!
IT'S SOMETHIN' LIKE THAT, FER SURE!
DRAW IT SOME BETTER, PETE.
YEAH, BUT ARNIE'S RIGHT. HE WERE A BIT MORE... LIZARDY.
WE ARE LITTLE VARMINT #2
WANTED
SHIT, MAN! THAT AIN'T NO GOOD. HELL, AH CAIN'T HARDLY RECO'NIZE HIM FROM THAT!

AND OUTSIDE....
TELLIN' YA, DOC, YA JUS' CAN'T GIT NO DECENT HELP THESE DAYS.
?
SCAFFOLD VIEW HOTEL
IN THREE DAY'S TIME I WILL BE BACK THIS WAY. FOR EVERY ONE OF THESE I SEE POSTED, I WILL GIVE YOU A NICKEL.
SURE, MISTER. YOU BET! YOU DON'T HAFTA GIVE NONE T'NOBODY ELSE!
I THOUGHT I COULD TRUST TH' DEPUTY T'USE HIS HEAD... THOSE LI'L FELLAS SHOULDA NEVER BEEN IN JAIL.
NOW WHO D'YA RECKON THAT IS?
WELL, I HEARD TELL THE DEPUTY'S TAKIN' IT RIGHT HARD.
MORNIN', WIDOW BURNS.
DOC.
I GOT PETE WORKIN' ON SOME 'WANTED' POSTERS. WE GOTTA GIT THEM LI'L FELLERS BACK 'FORE THEY GIT THEIRSELVES KILT.
EH? PETE?!
SHERIFF! HEY, SHERIFF! C'MERE AN LOOK AT THIS!
PETE CAIN'T DRAW ANY BETTER'N A CROSS-EYED, STUMP-LEGGEDY CAYUSE!
HOL'ON, PHIL. HE DONE TH'FIRST ONE REAL GOOD.
HE'S PUTTIN' CLOTHES ON THIS ONE!
LORD! I DON'T HAFTA DRAW 'EM NEKKID, DO I?
JUS' DRAW 'EM TH' WAY THEY ARE... THEY AIN'T GOT NO 'PARTS' T'SPEAK OF, NO HOW.
BILL, CAN YOU RUSTLE TH' SHERIFF AN' ME UP SOME BREAKFAST?

SUDDENLY!
WHA'?!
OH GOD, SHERIFF! DON'T TAKE M'BADGE! I'M SORRY I LET TH' LI'L VARMINTS GO! I DON' KNOW WHUT COME OVER ME! PLEASE GIMME A SECON' CHANCE! OH, WHERE'LL I EVER FIND ANOTHER JOB?! PLEASE! PLEASE!! DON'TAKE M'BADGE!!!
ORGH!
YIPE!
I DON'T WANT YER DAMN' BADGE! I WANT THEM LI'L FELLERS BACK HERE SAFE AN' SOUND....
HUH?
...AN' TWO EGGS, SCRAMBLED, STEAK RARE, SMOTHERED IN ONIONS, SIDE O' FRIED P'TATERS, BISCUITS 'N' BLACK COFFEE.
LOOK AT THIS HERE DRESS, WILL YA, SHERIFF?
IT'S JUST, YA KNOW... RUINED! INSIDE 'N' OUT!
AN' SEE, ALL DOWN IN HERE! PLUMB RUINED!
GOSH, SADIE, THAT'S, UH... AWFUL
HERE, SADIE, LEMME HELP YA WITH THAT.
WHO'S GONNA PAY FER THIS, SHERIFF?
I WILL! ME!
NO, ME!
LET ME! I GOT IT!!
I MEAN THE DRESS!
CAN'T GIVE YA ANY EGGS, ROGER AIN'T SUPPLYIN' 'EM NO MORE. SAYS HE NEEDS 'EM T' GROW NEW CHICKENS FROM.
OH, YEAH... ROGER. HE'S TH'... ISN'T HE THE SODBUSTER THAT'S ALWAYS LOSIN' HIS CHICKENS? TALKS ABOUT NUTHIN' ELSE?
I'M HOLDIN' YER GODDAM' DEPUTY RESPONSIBLE FER THIS LOUSY RUINED GODDAM' DRESS!
THAT'S HIM.

MEANWHILE...
WHAT'S HE DOIN' NOW?
HE WISHES TO KNOW HOW MANY HE WILL LOSE. SO EACH TIME, HE COUNTS HIS CHICKENS.
BEFORE THEY'RE SNATCHED.... HMPH! DID I SAY THAT?
HERP...LET'S YOU AN' ME TAKE A LOOK AROUND.
TONIGHT, I'M GONNA HIDE IN THIS ARROYO.... I CAN SEE THE BACK AND NORTH SIDE O' THE HEN-HOUSE FROM THIS TURNDANGLE, HERE.
UH, RIGHT.
ARROYO? TURNDANGLE?!
YOU'LL BE ABLE TO SEE THE FRONT OF THE HENHOUSE AN' THE YARD FROM UP THERE.
SOUNDS GOOD.
SO, TONIGHT, JUST GO TO BED AS USUAL. HERP AN' I'LL KEEP WATCH.

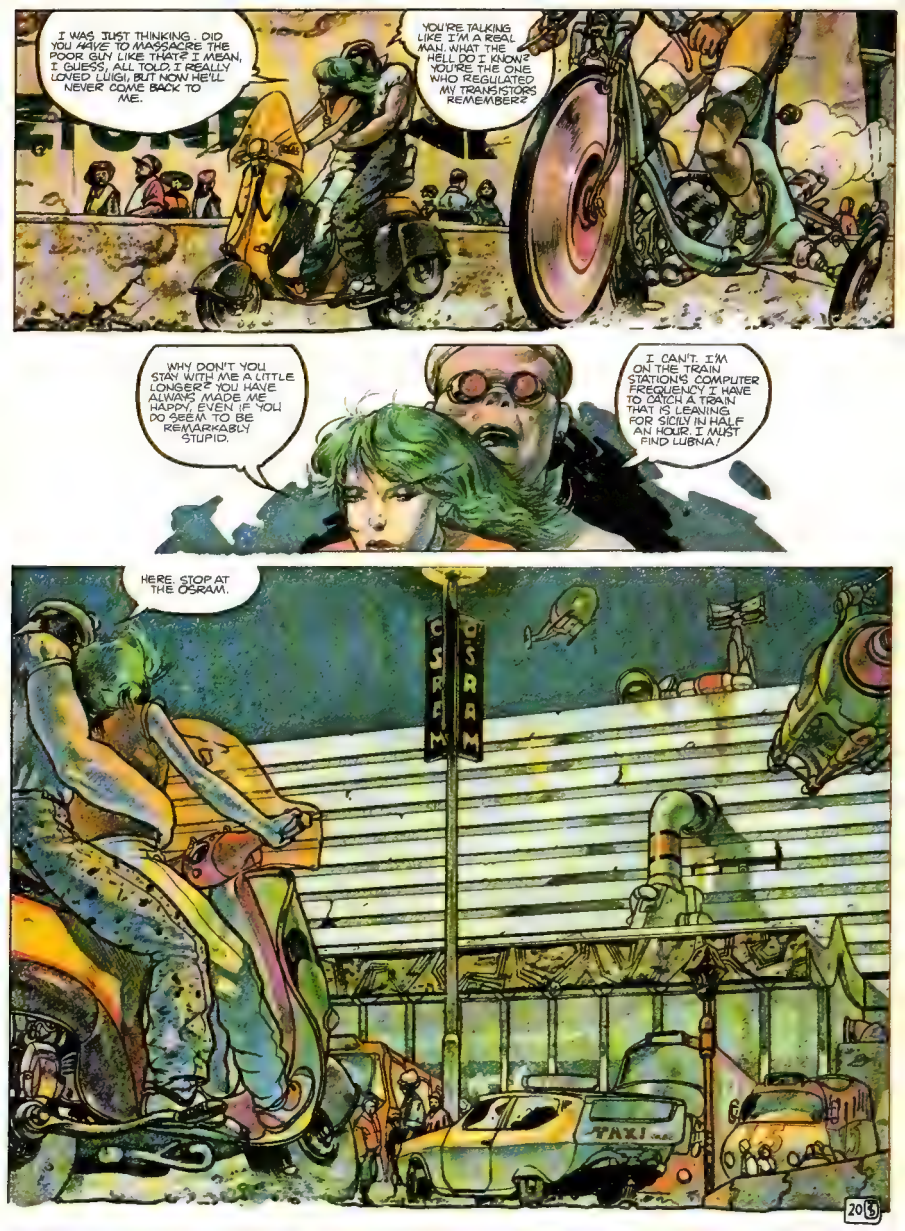

JAVELINA...
JAVELINA...
JAVELINA...

LATER... AT DAWN.
...TELLIN' YA, SWEAZ, FIVE O'THEM CHICKENS, LIKE, WALKED UPAN' ALL BUT JUMPED IN T'HER MOUTH. BRR!
WHY DIDN' YA STOP IT? YOU WERE SUPPOSED T'STOP IT!
I JUS' COULDN'T. IT WAS SO, YOU KNOW, NATURAL. ALMOST LIKE SHE WAS TH'....
THE WHAT?
IT WAS ALMOST... LIKE, RELIGIOUS.
YOU GONNA TELL TH' HENBOY?
GOT TO. IT'S TH' RIGHT THING, T'DO. BESIDES, WE NEED THAT HORSE!
C'MON... DO YOU, FER REAL THINK HE'S GONNA LEND US A HORSE WHEN YOU TELL HIM HIS WIFE IS A....
LATER STILL... A WERECOYOTE...!
WULL... GOLDERN! THAT'S SOMETHIN' T'WRITE HOME ABOUT, AIN'T IT?
FIRST ONE I EVER SAW.
BUT DON'T BE ANGRY AT HER. SHE CAN'T HELP IT.
DON'T EVEN KNOW SHE'S DOIN' IT.
...IS A WHUT?
ANGRY? WULL, YEAH. I GUESS I COULD BE... BUT, YA KNOW, FELLAS...
WHAT'S A FEW CHICKENS WHEN YER IN LOVE?
MUCH LATER...
YA KNOW, SWEAZ, I FEEL, LIKE... PRETTY GOOD.
FEELIN' GOOD M'SELF, HERF.
JUS' ONE THING...
YEAH?
WHAT TH' HELL'S A TURNDANGLE?
AND SO, WITH THE CHICKEN MYSTERY SO SUCCINCTLY SOLVED, OUR SMALL HEROES HEAD WEST ON THEIR CONTINUING QUEST FOR TEX ARCANA AND THE MYSTERIOUS WOMAN IN WHITE. MEANWHILE, BACK IN HANGMAN'S CORNERS ANOTHER MYSTERY IS BREWING...
NOW, JUST WHERE TH' HELL'D THESE THINGS COME FROM?
IT'S TH' HAVERSTRAW KID, SHERIFF. HE'S SLAPPIN' 'EM UP ALL OVER TOWN.
SLAPPED ONE ON OL' POP KLINGLER.
COMING SOON
COMING SOON
NUNZIO PAGANO VIOLINIST
TO BE CONTINUED

RANXEROX
LAST WE READ, RANX WAS PROGRAMMED BY RAINIER, LUBNA'S KIDNAPPER, TO KILL GEORGE FOX, A WIDELY READ ART CRITIC. REALIZING WHAT HE HAD DONE, RANX RETURNED TO RAINIER'S APARTMENT AND RAISED HELL.*
*WITH A CAPITAL H!
STUNF
CIAO, RANX! WHAT ARE YOU UP TO? DON'T YOU REMEMBER ME? I'M A FRIEND OF LUBNA'S.
SCREEK
LUBNA!!! ZZZ I'M LOOKING FOR HER... PERHAPS SHE IS LOST... MAYBE SHE'S DEAD...
WHAT? COME ON, JUMP ON! YOU CAN EXPLAIN ALL OF THIS TO ME AT MY PLACE!

MY HEAD... IT HURTS... UUHAAA... RAINIER... HE KILLED..
TALK!
YOU'RE STILL FEELING PRETTY BAD, HUH? LUCKY FOR YOU I AM STUDYING BIOELECTRONICS. I'LL FIX YOU UP, MY BIG, DEAR ROBOT!
THERE! IT WAS YOUR EMOTIONAL TERMINALS... AND YOUR SMELL BUTTON WAS A BIT DAMAGED.
A LITTLE LATER
IT'S WORKING!
HEY! WATCH IT!
NE

MUCH LATER..
MY DEAR RANX...YOU ARE DRIVING ME CRAZY. IS THAT WHY LUBNA LEAVES YOU FOR WEEKS ON END?
BRUUM
MY EX! I DUMPED HIM YESTERDAY... HE'S A DAMNED ANIMAL OVER SIX FEET TALL AND INCREDIBLY DANGEROUS. WHAT CAN WE DO?
SHIT, THAT MUST BE LUIGI!
YOU FILTHY WHORE...LET ME IN!
TUM TUM
I KNOW YOU'RE IN THERE! I SAW YOUR BIKE OUTSIDE. AND I COULD HEAR YOU MOAN! I'M GOING TO KILL YOU!
STRONK
SNORT!
AWWW, MARTINE..
I'LL DROP YOU OFF AT THE STATION AND THEN I'LL GET LOST. LUIGI LEFT SOME CLOTHES IN THE CLOSET. HELP YOURSELF. BOY, YOU REALLY SAVED ME..
...BUT YOU CAN'T GO ON THE STREETS WITH YOUR CIRCUITS EXPOSED! PUT THIS ON TOP OF YOUR HEAD. IT SHOULD FIT YOU PERFECTLY.
CARAMEL
19


I WAS JUST THINKING. DID YOU HAVE TO MASSACRE THE POOR GUY LIKE THAT? I MEAN, I GUESS, ALL TOLD I REALLY LOVED LUIGI, BUT NOW HE'LL NEVER COME BACK TO ME.
YOU'RE TALKING LIKE I'M A REAL MAN. WHAT THE HELL DO I KNOW? YOU'RE THE ONE WHO REGULATED MY TRANSISTORS REMEMBER?
WHY DON'T YOU STAY WITH ME A LITTLE LONGER? YOU HAVE ALWAYS MADE ME HAPPY, EVEN IF YOU DO SEEM TO BE REMARKABLY STUPID.
I CAN'T. I'M ON THE TRAIN STATION'S COMPUTER FREQUENCY. I HAVE TO CATCH A TRAIN THAT IS LEAVING FOR SICILY IN HALF AN HOUR. I MUST FIND LUBNA!
HERE. STOP AT THE OSRAM.
OSRAM
OSRAM
TAXI

RANX LIFTED THE POLE.
WHAT ARE YOU DOING, YOU IDIOT?
RROK!
MY BATTERY IS RUNNING DOWN. IF I CAN PLUG MYSELF INTO HERE, I CAN RECHARGE IT. THE VOLTAGE IS THE SAME AS MINE.
HERE'S THE BATTERY. I CAN'T PUT IT IN MYSELF. HELP ME... PLACE IT IN THE OPENING IN MY BACK.
LOOK, OPEN HERE. HURRY UP ONCE YOU TAKE IT OFF BECAUSE I'LL BE INCAPACITATED UNTIL YOU PUT THE BATTERY IN. HURRY UP, THEN!
HOW OLD IS THAT GIRL ANYWAY? ABOUT TWELVE? HE'S NOT BAD LOOKING, THOUGH... ESPECIALLY IN THAT POSITION.
NAH... I KNOW HER--SHE'S EIGHTEEN. LET'S GO BEAT *HIM* UP ANYWAY. WE'VE GOT NOTHING BETTER TO DO.

AREN'T YOU A LITTLE BIG TO BE PLAYING WITH DOLLS?

I BET SHE'S GOT AN ASS ON HER AS TENDER AS A FILET. WHAT DO YOU THINK?
HMMM.. WE'LL FIND OUT
LOOK, YOU POOR EXCUSES FOR MEN. GET THE FUCK OFF OF ME.

BYE BYE, SUCKER!
CLAK!

FRIZZ
THAT KICK CLOSED RANX'S BACK AND CONNECTED THE BATTERY...!

RAAAAGH!

TWENTY MINUTES AFTER THE CARNAGE, RANX WAS ON A TRAIN FOR PALERMO! GOODBYE, MARTINE!
AH! A FREE PLACE!
SHUT UP, YOU ASSHOLE! I WAS SLEEPING!
YEAH!

TO BE CONTINUED..

HM's STAR DISSECTIONS

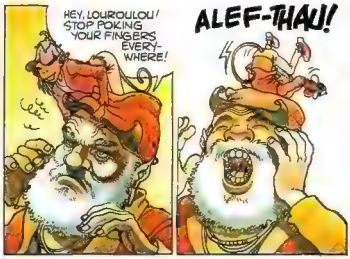
©1983 DREW FRIEDMAN

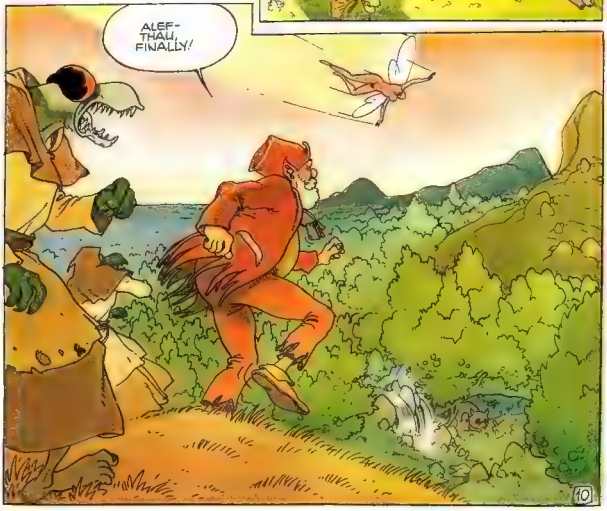
*THANKS TO JOHNNY CRAIG.

The Second Song

The Hunt for Louth
by Arno and Jodorowsky

IN LAST MONTH'S "THE SMALL EARTHWORM," WE READ THAT NAD AND ADA, THE YOUNG NEWLYWEDS, WERE DRAINED OF THEIR YOUTH BY THE WICKED NER RHAMMUS. ADA, PREGNANT AT THE TIME, DIED WHILE GIVING BIRTH TO THEIR DEFORMED CHILD.





I DREAMT THAT THIS WOULD HAPPEN! HOG! IT'S HOG!
?
OH! A LOUROULOU! A LOUROULOU! IS IT FOR ME?
YES, ALEF. THAT'S FOR YOUR BIRTH-DAY!
HE PLAYS MY FAVORITE SONGS! THANKS, HOG!
A LITTLE LATER ON..
VLOUF
WHAT IS IT, HOG? DO YOU REALLY THINK THEY WANT TO KILL US?
I DON'T KNOW. WHAT-EVER IT IS, IT'S STARTED ON THE OTHER SIDE!
11

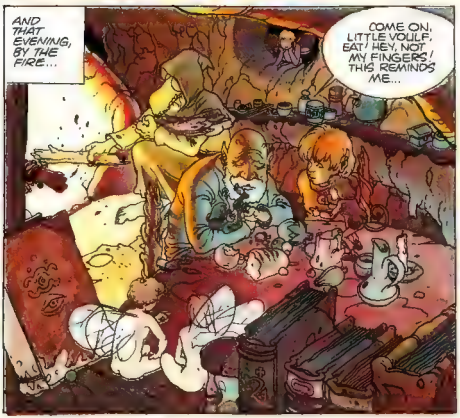
OVER THERE! LOOK!
EEAAAAH
EEAAK
NOTHING CHANGES, DON'T YOU KNOW?
UHHHHHH...
HIIIIIRK
AAARH
IT'S OVER.

LET'S GO SEE WHERE THEY CAME FROM!

HMMM, ANOTHER CONVOY FILLED WITH YOUNG DHARIENS DON'T THEY EVER LEARN?
HMMP?

A BABY! IT'S A BABY'S CRY, I'M SURE OF IT!
BE CAREFUL!
HMMP

HEY! LOOK HOW ADORABLE HE IS! IT IS A HE, ISN'T IT? A BABY VOULF!


AND THAT EVENING, BY THE FIRE...
COME ON, LITTLE VOULF, EAT! HEY, NOT MY FINGERS! THIS REMINDS ME...

"...OF WHEN I FOUND YOU, ALEF-THAU! IT WAS ON A WINDY EVENING, AND I WAS OFF LOOKING FOR SOME RARE PLANTS. I LOST MY WAY ALONG ORAVI, WHEN I CAME UPON ONE OF THOSE ANIMALS THE DHARIENS TAME... BUT THIS ONE WAS ENORMOUS!
13

"INTRIGUED, I APPROACHED THE ANIMAL, WHO HAD APPARENTLY SUFFERED QUITE A BIT, AND SEEMED EXHAUSTED. AND WHEN I GOT CLOSER, WHAT DO YOU THINK I FOUND MUFFLED BETWEEN HIS PAWS? A BABY!"

"A BABY WITHOUT ARMS AND LEGS? HOW DID THAT HAPPEN?, I ASKED MYSELF. WHAT WAS IN THIS CHILD'S FUTURE? COMPLETELY DISORIENTED, I PULLED OUT MY MAGICAL BONES - YOU KNOW I FANCY MYSELF A BIT OF A SAYER OF SOOTH, SO TO SPEAK!

"AND WHO DID I SEE? THE BABY, ALL GROWN UP, WITH ARMS AND LEGS, AND LEADING THE D'HARIENS TOWARDS LIBERTY AND AT HIS SIDE, THE MOST BEAUTIFUL WOMAN I THINK I'VE EVER SEEN. DURING MY RETURN HOME, I NAMED THE CHILD ALEF-THAU."

THERE, NOW YOU KNOW YOUR HISTORY AND YOU KNOW WHAT IS IN STORE FOR YOU, TOO.

ME? BUT HOW?

A FEW YEARS LATER...
TUM
TUTUM
TUM
TUTUM
TUTUM
THIS TIME WE'VE GOT HIM!
TUM TUTUM
TUM
TUM TUTUM
TUM
TUM TUTUM
TUM
TUM
TUTUM
A... A LOUTH!
WE HAVE TO WARN HOG!
HE'S GOING STRAIGHT INTO THE EN-CLOSURE!
15

THE BEAMS, QUICKLY!
HIIAARRR..
Z/Z ULP!
HARK
WHAK
THERE, MASTER WE SHOULD BE SAFE FOR THE TIME BEING!
YEAH? TAKE THIS SPEAR AND GET UP! THE LOUTH IS GETTING IMPATIENT!
LITTLE GIRL, AREN'T YOU AFRAID?
TYPICAL MAN! OF COURSE NOT! I'LL KILL IF I HAVE TO!
?!
TWO ARE STRONGER THAN ONE!
GO!
16

GO FOR THE TWO EYES UNDER HIS CHEST!
RHAMNUS!
ONE.. TWO.. THREE
KHAAPP
...NOW!
RHAMNUS!
RHAMNUS!
THAT'S IT!
THE LOUTH IS DEAD!
THAT'S IT!

DO YOU SEE ANYTHING, ALEF-THAU?
MEE UHHH...
HOG, COME SEE THIS GIRL!
YES! IT'S HER!
YOU SEE? HE DIDN'T DO SO BAD AFTER ALL.
?!
YOU!
ENOUGH!
SHEAK
PSSST!
HAH!
GRUMBLE
?!..
WHO ARE YOU?
I... I WAS BEGINNING NOT TO BELIEVE IT ANYMORE. HOG HAS TOLD ME SO MUCH ABOUT YOU.
LISTEN! WE DON'T HAVE A LOT OF TIME! YOU MUST HELP ME!
LOOK AT ME! I HAVE NO ARMS OR LEGS! HOW CAN I BE OF ANY HELP?
THAT'S NOT A PROBLEM. I CAN GIVE YOU WHAT YOU NEED! BUT FOR IT, YOU HAVE TO CONQUER THE SHIP!
WHAT SHIP?
THE SHIP OF MY PARENTS! IT HAS BECOME THE DEN OF NER-RHAMNUS! ON BOARD, YOU WILL FIND EVERYTHING YOU NEED IN ORDER TO BUILD ARMS AND LEGS!
DIAMANTE!
BUT...
?!?
SEE YOU SOON, DIAMANTE!
THEY'RE COMING! LEAVE QUICKLY!
I DON'T KNOW HOW, BUT I WILL CONQUER NER-RHAMNUS! I SWEAR IT!
18

TO BE CONTINUED...

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SOMETHING
REALLY
SPECIAL . . .

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In a Word—Splendid! A Look at Rowena

Rowena Morrill Gallery

"Jayne! *Jayne!* Come here—look. It's my book. It's my book!"

Thus the first real impact of Rowena Morrill on my personal universe. As a reviewer for a number of markets in and out of fantasy and science fiction, I'm subject to a constant flow of books, manuscripts, and galleys. What I had encountered on this particular noisy morning was a collection of color plates from Workman Press called *Tomorrow and Beyond* in which, in a full-page format, was the picture of a radiant little boy, so arresting, so beautifully modelled, with light and texture (texture of fabric, texture of flesh, texture of hair) that it took me more than a little while to take my attention away from that luminous young face and widen it to include the background. And here was a puppet with jewelled eyes, and there was the canvas of a carnival tent . . . "Jayne! That's my book!" and indeed it was. The very next day I received my author's copies of a new edition of *The Dreaming Jewels.* An author seldom has the privilege of an early look at a publisher's choice for a cover painting, and here was the compelling child, sure enough, gracing the front of my novel.

There were four more of her paintings in the Workman book, and I spent time with them, and then began to pay more attention to which artists did what on books and in the art exhibits I encountered at conventions.

I have to tell you that in the area of art, I come from ignorance and envy. I have always wanted to be a graphic artist, and my artist friends say to me, "Just go ahead—draw it the way you see it!" But these hands, so deftly obedient in fixing Volkswagens and *coq-au-vin,* just won't draw a good line even if you hold the ruler for them. They just won't do what I see with either outer or inner eye, and I give up in disgusted frustration. Therefore I stand awestruck before the likes of Rowena Morrill.

Rowena painted my portrait before we met. You'll find it on my collection *The Stars Are the Styx.* Since she worked from photographs, and all of them head shots, I found occasion to forgive her publicly for underestimating my muscles. That was at a convention, and she was "Art Guest of Honor"—rightly so. She had an hour for a presentation, and every would-be, could-be, and finished professional artist in the place filled the hall. She showed slides of her paintings, telling a little about each, frankly and clearly answering questions from the floor. There was—is—about her not a trace of the prima donna. She told us things about how she works—astonishing things. For example, after becoming familiar with the book (something all too few artists do, I'm afraid) and sketching out her composition, she begins to paint. She paints from the top of the canvas to the bottom, and then again from top to bottom . . . and then it's done. Finished with a finish it's hard to believe. And if she has to (she doesn't like to, but she will if she must), she'll do two of these a week.

When I first met her I had to look twice to see if it were really so: she's just as beautiful as those succulent maidens she paints. At the same time there is as little flirtatiousness about her as there is Big Ego. She is contained to such a degree that one must think of a word—not guardedness, it isn't that—*armored* is better. She speaks softly and gently, with complete and simple honesty.

In preparing these remarks I acquired a number of her slides and a projector and dragooned my friend, author, and accomplished painter Richard Englehart to fill in the wide-spectrum gaps in my understanding of art. One by one, as I screened the slides, he showed me some of the more evident skills in her composition—the continuing arc from tree-branch through dragon-wing to the angled sword of a fallen warrior; the basic triangle interlocking a circle buried in the chiaroscuro of forms and colors. And he marvelled with me at those things I had already noticed: her command of texture—flesh, fabric, wood, stone, steel—and light, often differently colored from different sources, with all the shadows from each exactly right.

For all her gentleness, she is very firm when firmness is called for. In a phone conversation (we live on opposite sides of the continent) she promised me some color negatives of my favorite paintings. Very excited, I blathered in my lumpish fashion about a place I know where I could get enlargements which, at a short distance, look like original paintings, since they are done on a surface complete with brush marks.

There was an eloquent pause from her end of the telephone, and then she said gently, "Oh, please, no. There are never any brush marks."

Right, Rowena. No brush marks. Never.

Theodore Sturgeon

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Ghosts I Have Been

The Golden Swan

Twilight Terror

King Dragon

June 2483
by Todd Klein & Murphy Anderson
WHAT A BORE! THERE'S NOTHING WORTH EXPERIENCING ON THE HOLO-STAGE TONIGHT, HELEN!
YOU'RE SO RIGHT, MURPH! SWITCH IT OFF, AND...
...LET'S ENJOY AN EVENING OUT...
...IN OUR ALTER EGOS!
MMMMM... THIS FRESH NIGHT AIR IS INVIGORATING, BUCK!
HEY-- WHAT SAY WE DROP IN ON KILLER AND ARDALA KANE?
GREAT IDEA, WILMA...
...AND AFTER THAT LET'S STOP BY DR. HUER'S, HUH?

FRANCIS FORD COPPOLA
THE OUTSIDER

Illustration by Brian McCall

AN INTERVIEW BY ROBERT MORALES

A few moments ago, Francis was saying that he had thought he would always be able to work. That he was not like an athlete, if he lost his legs he could direct from a wheelchair, if he lost his sight he could write with a Dictaphone. He said he never realized what he nearly lost—the only thing that counts: his mind.

Eleanor Coppola, *Notes*
November 3, 1978 entry on the making of *Apocalypse Now*

You sit talking with Francis Coppola, spending the first twenty minutes or so trying to reconcile this affable, bright guy with the vivid images you've got floating in your head—helicopters drifting out of a Vietnamese jungle, another huge strip of jungle flaring up in a radiant wound; a peephole view of a shattered Gene Hackman, sitting in a room he's stripped in a search for eavesdropping devices, mournfully playing his saxophone—until you remind yourself how much complexity there is to anyone, how little time you have, *get with it . . .* then it's just like hanging out with somebody in the eye of a party, chatting intensely, only in this case the party in question was the rest of the world. Coppola has this sort of casual magnetism, and you're either attracted or repelled.

F.F.C.: All from the heart.

Not yet forty-five, Coppola is widely acknowledged as one of cinema's certifiable masters. By the time he had reached celebrity status for adapting Mario Puzo's *The Godfather* to the screen in 1972, he'd also already directed four other features—*Dementia 13* (1963), for Roger Corman; the hilarious *You're a Big Boy Now* (1966); *Finian's Rainbow* (1968); and his first serious work, *The Rain People* (1969)—received an Oscar for scripting *Patton*, and founded his own maverick film company, American Zoetrope, with George Lucas as its vice-president. (Beginning with *The Godfather*, Zoetrope has produced all of Coppola's pictures, as well as Lucas's first two, *THX 1138* and *American Graffiti*, Carroll Ballard's *The Black Stallion*, Wim Wenders's *Hammett*, and Caleb Deschanel's *The Escape Artist*—the best unknown film of last year—among others.) Established as a brilliant craftsman by *The Godfather*'s critical and financial success, Coppola proceeded to make its 1974 sequel and *The Conversation*. Both films served as evidence of his artistic capabilities: *Godfather II* transformed a slick gangster story into a great American epic; *The Conversation*, originally conceived in the late sixties, hooked onto the nation's Watergate paranoia with its suspenseful portrait of a professional wiretapper wrestling with a moral dilemma. The corruption of the spirit was a dominant theme for the three films, and that idea would find no greater expression than in his next film, *Apocalypse Now*.

From the beginning of filming in 1976 to its general release in 1979, Coppola's attempt to shape the Vietnam War experience to his own personal vision proved to be the turning point of his life: problems ranging from typhoons, to a heart attack for actor Martin Sheen, to Coppola's own difficulties in figuring out a working structure for the film, eventually doubled its costs and plunged its director into a terrible financial hole from which he's only now emerging. Rumors of disaster brought flocks of uninvited reporters to shooting sites in the Philippines, resulting in a breech between Coppola and the press that exists much to this day. These unrelenting pressures sent Coppola into a state of self-doubt that nearly wiped out his marriage and kept him reediting *Apocalypse* practically until the day before it opened.

Surviving that, he then went to work on what would essentially be a simple, inoffensive love story and his first major experiment with new video technology, *One from the Heart*.

This film also went into substantial cost overruns and it, Zoetrope Studios, and Coppola received little but pronouncements of doom in the press. Within two weeks of its opening, the film was withdrawn from circulation because it seemed to Coppola there was no way to escape the onus of so much controversy for such a little fantasy. (During its initial run in New York, I went to see it on a rainy Thursday night expecting an empty theater, but the 10 PM showing was packed. At the end, everyone clapped lightly. Go figure it.)

Last year Coppola filmed adaptations of two classic S. E. Hinton teen novels, *The Outsiders*, released this past spring, and *Rumblefish*, due out in the fall. On schedule, on budget. *The Outsiders*, wonderfully melodramatic, surprisingly funny, luridly sentimental—almost a Sam Fuller movie, actually—did great with kids at the box office ("Those fourteen-year-old girls saved my ass, if you want to know the truth," Coppola told me.) but, incredibly, was panned by most critics as a failed adult film.

Francis Coppola hasn't lost his studios, despite six years of entertainment news stories to the contrary. Throughout our talk, he very much gave the impression of someone just beginning to hit stride. He intends to fight his tendency to talk openly and specifically about his immediate plans, to devote much of his attention toward his technological experiments (he and George Lucas are rivals in patents pending for their respective video and computer developments), and buying as much free time for himself as possible. Toward that end, several weeks after we spoke it was announced that Coppola begins shooting *The Cotton Club*, a musical starring Richard Gere and Gregory Hines, from his own screenplay late this summer. For this task he'll reportedly receive a mere three million dollars, the lucky dog.

—Robert Morales

HM: I can't think of a filmmaker whose finances are more looked into than yours. Doesn't that make it difficult to get anything done?

FC: Yes, especially in that the attention given to finances tends to create the mistaken impression that that's really a lion's share of what's going on, and tends to somehow distort where the effort and energy is going. I think when you decide or try to be independent, or free of supervision or the principle of The Bosses, you by nature are forced to come up with your own money and manipulate money. And yet you're doing it because of the movies and what you hope to do in the future; and it starts to backfire on you when people discussing your work, or your situation in life, always deal with finances—or worse than finances, *financial catastrophe*—because that often makes a good story.

There was a period about three months ago when I was trying to patch together my banking—you can imagine what that was like. There were some articles that came out in *Newsweek* and I lost my loan—the vice-president who had to approve the loan was so frightened that, if there was any fuss, it would immediately be in *Newsweek*.

HM: I'm surprised nobody's asked you to make your tax records public.

FC: Yeah, I am also surprised the question of budget and financing seems to be so interesting to everyone. I sometimes think it has to do with the whole issue of money and the importance of money getting really pushed out of proportion in our age in general.

HM: You've spoken out against studios who are either trying to stop people from videotaping off the air, or collect a percentage of all blank cassettes or VCRs sold.

FC: By those charters of the FCC that's the first thing you learn when you're a ham radio operator—the airwaves belong to the people. And if that's true, then how come all these guys who are making so much money on it—when all the people want is to have a matter of convenience, taping something—are gonna try to charge 'em for that? I think if that's the case, then the FCC ought to charge all the commercial companies making money off the airwaves—double their [licensing] fee. And *then* we'll give them a little [royalty] fee off the Betamax machine—they won't like that; their lobbyists will descend on Washington in droves. It all comes down to the same problem when you talk about the entertainment industry, the car industry, the government—the wrong people are running the world.

HM: It's not even people; it's [numerical] figures.

FC: Figures, and a way of looking at what the movie business is, what the objectives really should be. Those people are so critical of regular people when they don't make a bank payment or goof-off or rob a grocery store—yet we've sat here since 1946 and watched this Harvard Business School-mentality destroy the automobile industry, the movie industry, everything that was here after the war—and no one says to them "Hey, look what *you've* done!" I imagine that it's gotta get worse and worse and worse until it finally changes.

HM: But then all those guys'll probably regroup and return with smiling faces.

FC: They have the ability to make partnerships—that's their strength. And the more creative people don't know how; they always want 100% of everything. These guys know you take 10% or 15% and make these coalitions, and that's their power: it's the ability to make partnerships and to plan.

HM: A lot of your planning, and money, goes into research and development of computer and video technology. How's that progressing for you?

FC: We've been seriously involved in the idea that there will be electronic cinema—even now, when the technology isn't perhaps quite ready to do it all—so when it comes about we know how to work with it. On *One from the Heart*—people didn't understand that—they said, "Oh, this is going to have something to do with electronics." So when they went to see the film they didn't see any *Tron* effects or anything weird, so *what is this guy talking about?* For that picture we built sets on nine sound stages, we thought it would give a particular theatrical charm and provide a kind of never-seen-before fairy-tale ambiance, but it also was enabling us to work with a system that one day would allow you to do this in an empty room [by adding the sets electronically]. That system was used also in *The Outsiders*, which shows you can make a totally poetic-naturalistic film [in this fashion], and it was used on *Rumblefish*, which is more of a Wellesian expressionism . . . Simply speaking, film is a material substance and electronics is the manipulation of energy—as you can imagine, the manipulation of energy is much freer, much more articulate and quicker, and easier to eliminate human labor—and so, for that reason, would make filmmaking extremely less expensive . . . in a way that is not mechanistic but is truly an instrument the artist doesn't have to touch or deal with [on a nuts-and-bolts level], but it will amplify and multiply what he can do and yet he can still work with the materials he's comfortable with—pencil, paper, typewriter. I am not one who believes that in order to enter the electronic phase of filmmaking you gotta have like a spaceship . . . it's more on the idea that a piano is a machine and a recording studio is technology and yet it's good for music.

HM: Also, a drastic cut in production costs wouldn't make the possibility of failure such a killing thing.

FC: That's so true. You're making a movie that costs 25 or 30 million dollars, you're up against it—it's a terrifying ex-

perience. It's like being the ultimate diamond cutter—you have to make this blow and you don't know whether it will shatter it or whether it will be something twice as valuable. That's not a desirable weight to put on talent; talent is like anything beautiful that has to be cultivated and protected. You don't put a flower in a garden and then put it through such stress that it can't possibly survive and just applaud the one or two that do. It's not *sports*. Recently the point of view towards film is more like the sports or financial page: So-and-so hit a hundred homeruns or struck out—everything is put in those terms.

HM: I've noticed that most production companies have become more like brokerage houses—buying ideas, and maybe developing them, then selling them off at a profit: they're not particularly interested in the finished product, they're interested in the deal.

FC: It's an exciting field on that level, and in L.A. especially, the community is so hypnotized in the day-to-day dealmaking process that you really wonder if the movies themselves are really that important. Surely the pictures they're making are so much now based on the previous success that there's a real sameness—where people have a successful movie and make it five times in a row, call it Part I, Part II, Part III—I started that [chuckles self-deprecatorily] too, but when I did *The Godfather, Part II*, part of my concept was it be very different from the first one, be more serious, more artistically ambitious. And when it came out, a big segment of the audience really rejected it. . . .

It's funny—I remember vividly going to the theaters and hearing people's reaction to *Godfather II* as being depressed, and that I had failed in what I was trying to do—and slowly, as the years went by, I started to hear people say, you know, I really like the second one better. Now, that's almost the general feeling I get.

HM: I think the feeling changed when you reedited it for television.

FC: I hadn't thought of that, but I guess it gave them a look at the whole thing and they could see that one was a little more dense or—I don't know what—more serious.

HM: There are things that you notice—the way that Robert DeNiro and all the actors in the early Vito Corleone scenes have all the same mannerisms of the older counterparts; and that doesn't really come across until—

FC: Unless you see them together.

HM: Weren't you going to reedit *Apocalypse Now* into a six-hour TV version?

FC: Well, *Apocalypse* was just on ABC recently and they came to me and said would you like to do that, and make it over two nights—and I said sure I would, when would it have to be done? And they said well, in a month and a half. There was no way I could do it, it would take six months . . . I do have a lot of interesting footage. *Apocalypse* was a troubled picture, and when we showed the film in its early previews the people were just horrified, so we took out scenes that were either a little difficult or made the film longer, in an attempt to make a film that would go over a little better. And now as I look back it might be fun . . . *Apocalypse* was meant to be a film that *was* what it was about. After dealing with such stupendous themes which are difficult for anybody to grapple with, I decided that the movie would be an immersion into that—I can't even call it a war; it was beyond a war . . . so that was more an experience than a narrative structure.

HM: When *Apocalypse* came out there was a screening for the Vietnamese, and at the time you felt you shouldn't comment as to what their reaction was. Can you say now?

FC: It seems to me that the Vietnamese and even the Cubans who seemed on one level very impressed with the reconstruction of the war, still would have liked the point of view of the United States aggressing on these people and their country to be depicted more pointedly. They felt in some way the experiential part of the film defused the facts which, as they saw it, deserved a more political kind of primer in what was this country doing over there in the first place. In talking to them, I tried to express that the film was *not* about the Vietnamese, the film was about America and Americans, it was really about us bringing our culture over somewhere, and that I didn't feel confident to make a film from the Vietnamese point of view—that, to me, was the Vietnamese director's job.

"So many people ask me about George Lucas..."

HM: You're quoted in the recent George Lucas biography [Dale Pollack's *Skywalking*] as saying it would've been great if you'd produced *Star Wars* and he'd produced *Apocalypse*. What would've been different?

FC: Well, I think if I had been the producer of *Star Wars* it would have had every bit of the visual and graphic excitement that it had, because that's George's speciality—but it would've had great performances; that's *my* speciality. I always was a good influence on George in area of script, in area of acting and actors and casting. *Apocalypse*: I'm sure George's influence would have made the visual and action sequences even better, and it would have also maybe been made more efficiently—perhaps by being made more efficiently, however, it would have lost some of the insanity that it had which is so appropriate to that subject matter.

So many people ask me about George. . . .

George was a kid when I met him and I was a guy who wanted not to get sucked into what the Hollywood of that day was. The two of us really had a tremendous amount of fun. He was like my kid brother. He had a wonderful sense of humor—he did the most bizarre kind of Dead End Kids-type things. Everything George was good at I was weak at, and everything George was weak at I was good at. And our backgrounds imply that: I was a theater student and theater director in college, he was a design student. . . He's a fragile guy, and he's very brilliant and he's very sweet, but he's very concerned about protecting himself because maybe he doesn't feel as hearty or as rambunctious as some of us . . . Shy, too. I understand in the book they depict me as a somewhat Rabelaisian-type and he was always sort of well, "Francis, should we be doing this?" But sometimes those two extremes coming together really do produce some very wonderful results.

HM: I was thinking—since *One from the Heart* your theatrical background has become much more evident in your work.

FC: One assumes now, today, that movies are supposed to be realistic but, you know, movies aren't supposed to be *anything* in particular. I started to become just more interested in exploring the ways you can work with style and working with unreal situations in order to get at the themes of today that maybe you couldn't get at it if you were always doing it in a naturalistic style.

Style is the new frontier. Theater allows that you work in many different styles, but in the large commercial film industry you begin to feel that you're just not allowed to do anything, except to do the same thing again. And one thing about my career that I would say I'm proud of is that every one of my films is different from the other ones. It's because I'm

trying to figure out—Maybe you could say the last twenty years represented me learning about movies and maybe in the next twenty years I might make use of what I learned, less as a kind of journeyman and more as someone who knows how to work with style and is able to, for the first time, put together something more like dramatic literature, which is where my interest is. I'm not just interested in the movie business—in fact, I become less and less interested each month. I very much want to take a leave of absence; I have other ambitions and ideas, and very much would like the chance to write an ambitious personal piece—but I gotta be able to have a year and a half or two years to *write*, and I have never been able to afford that . . . but I do think it's coming very soon. I'm interested in being an artist, in being in the tradition of people who wrote novels in the twenties—maybe I don't have the stuff to be on the level of Thomas Mann, Marcel Proust, James Joyce—but I would like to aspire in that direction. I don't want to aspire to be, you know, the Top Grossing Guy all the time.

HM: Let's talk about *Rumblefish*. I've heard it's in black-and-white and was wondering what led to that decision.

FC: Well, we made two movies in a row, and the idea was *The Outsiders* would be made very much in the style of that book, which was written by a 16-year-old girl, and would be lyrical and poetical, very simple, sort of classic. The other one, however, *Rumblefish*, which she wrote years later, was more adult, kind of Camus for teenagers, this existential story. My feeling was, well, what would it be like to really make an art film for older teenagers; and just as we, when we were kids in the fifties, saw Bergman and *Touch of Evil* and Fellini, and all those films which so impressed us—what would it be like to make a film today for this audience going to see *Porky's*, and show them the whole arsenal of what movies could be, kind of make a *Peter and the Wolf* of the cinema. Perhaps having seen some of that, they wouldn't tolerate some of the stuff they're given.

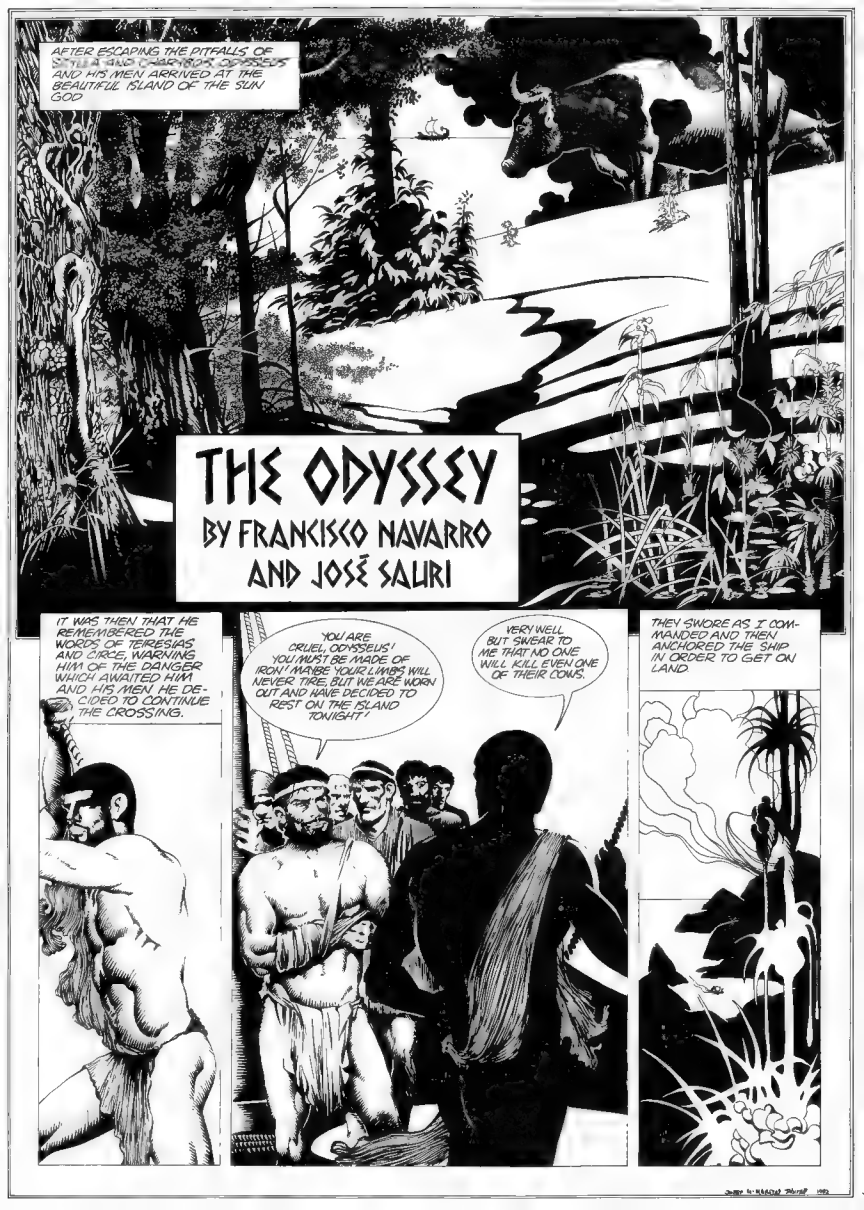
Because one of the main characters was colorblind, and the colorblindness and deafness of this character was a metaphor—the film is *not* in black-and-white, by the way; it's hard to say what it *is* in, but that's part of the texture of it—there is color in it, too. I had an idea as one of the main themes of *Rumblefish*, that youth doesn't very often think in terms of time running out for them but in fact time *is* running out. And as a time motif I hired Stewart Copeland, the drummer for the Police, to perform that idea. So he wrote the music and performed most of it. It was a very laborious job: first he created basic rhythm tracks that set up the rhythm of the whole movie. Then he went around and got them to record different sounds that were component sounds of that world and adjusted them so their rhythms worked with the percussion rhythms, and made loops out of them, so that as the rhythm of *Rumblefish* goes through, it may be the percussion track, then it will be the clanking of the pipes, or the horns, or the whatever, but continuing in the same composition.

Most of what I've been doing since *Apocalypse* has to do with my idea that I'll be able to work in a medium so fluid and so simple, that it'll be more like being a cinema-novelist in that you can work somewhat alone, and with your small troupe of collaborators—maybe at most twelve—so that rather than making films in a linear way in which you gather all the little components and glue 'em together and rework them and take them apart, that you work in a more spatial way, like in the composition of music. Making films will be more of a performance art—not only for the actors, but for the principal artists—we'll all get to go somewhere for a month and stay up a lot of nights and, when we leave, there'll be a finished piece of work. I think that's the way it will be.

Happy hour for Coppola and Dennis Hopper.

Coppola on the set of *Rumblefish*. "Eight ball in the side pocket!"

Matt Dillon, Vincent Spano, and Mickey Rourke (left to right): just boys being boys in *Rumblefish*.


AFTER ESCAPING THE PITFALLS OF SCYLLA AND CHARYBDIS, ODYSSEUS AND HIS MEN ARRIVED AT THE BEAUTIFUL ISLAND OF THE SUN GOD
THE ODYSSEY
BY FRANCISCO NAVARRO AND JOSÉ SAURI
IT WAS THEN THAT HE REMEMBERED THE WORDS OF TERESIAS AND CIRCE, WARNING HIM OF THE DANGER WHICH AWAITED HIM AND HIS MEN. HE DECIDED TO CONTINUE THE CROSSING.
"YOU ARE CRUEL, ODYSSEUS! YOU MUST BE MADE OF IRON! MAYBE YOUR LIMBS WILL NEVER TIRE, BUT WE ARE WORN OUT AND HAVE DECIDED TO REST ON THE ISLAND TONIGHT!"
"VERY WELL BUT SWEAR TO ME THAT NO ONE WILL KILL EVEN ONE OF THEIR COWS."
THEY SWORE AS I COMMANDED AND THEN ANCHORED THE SHIP IN ORDER TO GET ON LAND.

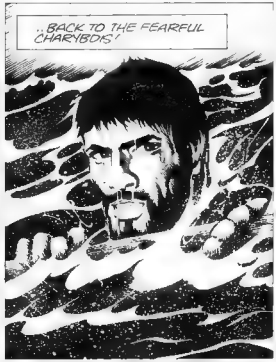
AS SOON AS THE DAWN BROKE, WE WERE FORCED TO DEFEND OUR SHIP, DUE TO AN IMPETUOUS WIND WHICH COVERED THE SEA AND LAND WITH OMINOUS CLOUDS.
FOR ONE WHOLE MONTH, THE SEA FROTHED IMPESSANTLY
AND MEANWHILE, NO ONE EVEN THOUGHT ABOUT THE CATTLE, THOUGH OUR FOOD SUPPLY WAS DIMINISHING
WHEN THE PROVISIONS WERE EXHAUSTED AND HUNGER GNAWED AWAY AT OUR INSIDES..
I WENT FURTHER ONTO THE ISLAND AND PRAYED TO THE GODS IT WAS THEN THAT I SENSED DISASTER
IN MY ABSENCE, EURYLOCHUS SUCCEEDED IN CONVINCING THE MEN..
COURAGE, COMPANIONS! WE SHALL OFFER THESE HEADS TO THE GODS AND IF THE SUN WANTS TO LOSE US, SO BE IT. I'D RATHER DIE SWALLOWING UP THE WAVES.
...THAN WASTE AWAY LITTLE BY LITTLE ON THIS WRETCHED ISLAND!

WHEN I RETURNED, I FOUND THAT THE OMEN HAD COME TRUE
FOR SIX DAYS MY COMPANIONS HAD BEEN CELEBRATING THEIR NEW-FOUND WEALTH, FEEDING ON THE BEST ANIMALS OF THE BROOD.
ON THE SEVENTH DAY THE VIOLENCE OF THE STORM CAME TO AN END AND WE EMBARKED ON OUR JOURNEY
BUT AS SOON AS WE SET SAIL, THE VENGEANCE OF THE GODS BROKE LOOSE

ONLY I, COULD HOLD ON TO THE SHIP. MY MEN WOULD NEVER RETURN TO THEIR COUNTRY.

THROUGHOUT THE NIGHT I WAS AT THE MERCY OF THE WAVES.

AND IT WAS FINALLY AT DAWN THAT I UNDERSTOOD WHERE THE WATERS HAD TAKEN ME :


.. BACK TO THE FEARFUL CHARYBDIS !

I GRABBED A FIG TREE, LIKE A BAT..
WITHOUT BEING ABLE TO CLIMB UP THE ROOTS OR TO SECURE MY FEET..
UNTIL CHARYBDIS, IN ONE OF HER INFINITE CYCLONES, THREW THE MAST TOWARDS ME!
NINE MORE DAYS PASSED, AND I WAS AT THE MERCY OF THE SEA. ON THE TENTH DAY..

YOU ARE IN GOOD HANDS, ODYSSEUS. YOU ARE WITH CALYPSO
WHY DID CALYPSO, THE DAUGHTER OF ATLAS, TREAT ME WITH CIVILITY AND PREFERENCE?
WHY DID SHE SEEM TO BE IN LOVE WITH ME, AND VERY POSSESSIVE, AT THAT?

I WASN'T SURE AT THE TIME, BUT THIS IS WHAT HAPPENED...
AREN'T YOU HAPPY, ODYSSEUS? SOON YOU WILL BE A FATHER AGAIN!
I CANNOT SAY THAT THE SEVEN YEARS THAT I REMAINED IN OGYGIA WERE TOTALLY UNHAPPY, BUT NOT EVEN THE PROMISE OF IMMORTALITY SUCCEEDED IN CALMING MY SOUL. HOMESICKNESS WAS SUCH THAT MY CLOTHES WERE SPOTTED WITH TEARS.

UNTIL, ONE DAY...
DON'T CRY ANYMORE, ODYSSEUS. YOU CAN LEAVE, IF THAT IS WHAT YOU DESIRE. THE GODS HAVE ORDERED IT, AND I MUST FULFILL THEIR WISHES.
PROMISE ME, BEFORE I LEAVE, THAT YOU WILL NOT DETEST ME.
YOU ARE ALWAYS PRUDENT, ODYSSEUS, BUT NOT NECESSARILY JUST. I PROMISE YOU THAT YOU SHALL HAVE NO PROBLEM RETURNING TO YOUR HOMELAND.
SO THAT DAY I BEGAN WORK. WITH AN AXE, I CUT POPLAR AND SPRUCE TREES TO CONSTRUCT MY BOAT. FOR FOUR DAYS I WORKED ANXIOUSLY UNTIL THE RAFT WAS READY. AND ON THE FIFTH DAY, I SET SAIL.

TO BE CONTINUED.

The Way of the Worlds

©1983 Nicola Cuti

THEY CAME FROM *MARS* ON A CHILLY OCTOBER EVE. THEIR UNCOMMON BRILLIANCE LIT UP THE SKY--BUT THIS WAS NO INNOCENT METEOR SHOWER. ON THE NIGHT OF ALL SAINTS CAME THE *ARMADA!*
FROM THE SHIPS EMERGED LEATHERY-SKINNED OCTOPOIDS IN THEIR SHINY WAR TRIPODS---
--HEAT RAYS FROM THEIR CANNONS RAZED THE COUNTRYSIDE-LEAVING CHARRED TIMBERS, PUDDLES OF MELTED GIRDERS, AND SIZZLING, ROASTED CORPSES IN THEIR RELENTLESS APOCALYPTIC SWEEP.
THEN ONE GLORIOUS DAY THE "INVINCIBLE" MARTIANS *FELL*--SLAIN BY THE *MICROSCOPIC PESTS* WHO PLAGUED OUR DAILY BREAD AND MILK. THEIR DYING, CORPULENT HULKS STUMBLED TO THE BARREN EARTH
WHAT COULD WE DO WITH THEM? MILLIONS OF DEAD, GRAY MOLLUSKS. WE HADN'T THE STRENGTH TO BURY THEM. FAMINE WAS--EVERYWHERE...
...AND NOW, SO IS:
MAC MARTIAN ON A BUN!
Cuti

Professor Neutron
©1982
TOMMY AND BILLY... I'M SO GLAD THAT YOU BROUGHT SPARKY TODAY.
BIOLOGY IS A WONDERFUL SCIENCE, BOYS... IT'S ABOUT THE MIRACLE OF LIFE!
Poof!
LET'S USE MY SPECIAL SHRINK RAY.. AND TAKE A BIOLOGY FIELD TRIP.
JUST LOOK AT THIS, BOYS! SPARKY IS MADE UP OF MANY DIFFERENT VITAL ORGANS. EACH ONE IS IMPORTANT IN IT'S OWN WAY.

THAT HEART PUMPS MANY THOUSANDS OF GALLONS OF BLOOD EACH YEAR....
SAY BILLY... WATCH OUT! THAT STOMACH CONTAINS SOME PRETTY POWERFUL DIGESTIVE JUICES!
THIS TRIP SURE HAS BEEN ALOT OF FUN... AND I'M SURE IT'S ANSWERED MANY OF YOUR SCIENCE QUESTIONS, BUT... IT'S TIME THAT WE WERE GETTING BACK TO THE REAL WORLD.
WE'RE BACK!!!
POOM!
SPARKY!
ANIMAL RESEARCH PLAYS AN IMPORTANT ROLE IN THE GATHERING OF SCIENCE INFORMATION... IT ALLOWS US TO DO RESEARCH ON ANIMALS FIRST... BEFORE INTRODUCING THE HUMAN ELEMENT... SAY BOYS... NOW THAT WE'RE FINISHED WITH SPARKY... DO EITHER OF YOU HAVE A BABY BROTHER OR SISTER THAT YOU COULD BRING ALONG NEXT TIME?
LINTON '83

IMAGE
© J. JONES 1983
BUT OVER TIME, THINGS IN DANGER WITH THE WIND TEND TO THICKEN THEMSELVES.
I'VE SEEN THE BOUGH BREAK WHEN THE WIND BLOWS.
OTHERS TEND TO BEND.
I'VE SEEN THE CRADLE FALL.
THERE ARE AMONG US THOSE THICK AS TWO SHORT PLANKS.
© 1983 JEFFREY JONES

SO FAR: THE FINAL RECKONING IS AT HAND. ZORA AND ROB THE EARTHMAN HAVE TAKEN AMON'S HIBERNATING BODY BACK TO THE GENESIS II SPACESHIP, HOPING SOME WAY CAN BE FOUND TO SAVE HIM. ON THE HONEYCOMB, NYLEA LEADS THE REBEL LEGIONS IN THEIR FINAL CONFRONTATION WITH THE FORCES OF THE SISTERHOOD STILL LOYAL TO QUEEN SHARTA.

CRASH!
BRAM
ZORA
WROOM
TURA AND NYLEA LAY SIEGE TO SHARTA'S LAST HOLD-OUT—THE ALMOST-IMPREGNABLE PALACE OF LIFE. ONLY THE SMALL, MANEUVERABLE, SINGLE-SEAT FIGHTERS CAN GET IN CLOSE ENOUGH TO DO ANY DAMAGE—DROPPING HEAT MISSILES IN NEAR-SUICIDAL BOMB RUNS AGAINST THE PALACE'S FORMIDABLE DEFENSES. MEANWHILE, ASSAULT TROOPS WAIT ANXIOUSLY FOR A BREACH IN THE DEFENSES.
WE'RE IN! THE SHIELDS IN THE NORTHERN SECTOR ARE CRACKING!
CONCENTRATE ALL FIRE-POWER THERE!
AND PREPARE THE ASSAULT TROOPS TO STORM THE BREACH!
WE'VE GOT TO MOVE IN QUICKLY OTHERWISE WE'RE LOST

NYLEA LEADS THE CHARGE, AND ONE-BY-ONE, SHARTA'S DEFENSIVE POSITIONS FALL.
CRAC
CRAC
AIEEE
THE CONTROL ROOM IS THEIR OBJECTIVE. WHERE NYLEA INTENDS TO SETTLE THE SCORE WITH SHARTA.
ZWAM!
ZWOOP
ZZZTTTS
AND SHE MAKES IT— BUT IN HER BLIND HASTE, BURSTING INTO THE ROOM, SHARTA GETS A CHANCE TO SHOOT FIRST...
AAGH!
BRAM
I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU, TRAITOR!
"YOU SOLD YOUR ASS TO THOSE PIG-MEN TO STEAL THE HONEYCOMB FROM ME, BUT I'LL NEVER GIVE IT UP.
BRAM
I WANT MORE THAN A THRONE, SHARTA— I WANT YOUR HEAD ON A STICK!
BRAM
I MUST AVENGE BRONCO, LEKA, AND ALL THE OTHERS WHO'VE FALLEN TO YOUR UNQUENCHABLE AMBITION.
CLEG
DAMN! SHE HIT THE BUTTON!
THE SELF-DESTRUCT MECHANISM HAS BEEN ACTIVATED... AND IT'S IRREVERSIBLE! WE'VE HAD IT, BUT AT LEAST ZORA AND THE OTHERS ARE SAFE.
RUMBLEE
ERR
I'LL SEE YOU IN HELL, BITCH...
SCRAMM

A CHAIN OF DEAFENING EXPLOSIONS ENSUES, FIRST IN THE PALACE OF LIFE, THEN THROUGHOUT THE HONEYCOMB. A FEW SECONDS LATER, THE WHOLE PLANET IS LIKE AN OVERHEATED BOILER ABOUT TO BURST...
THE HONEYCOMB'S TURNED INTO A BOMB. THEY KNEW THEIR ATTACK MIGHT END IN MASS SUICIDE.
THEY DID IT FOR US, ROB.
AND BECAUSE THEY REFUSED TO SUCCUMB TO SHARTAS BLACKMAIL IT WAS THE ONLY WAY TO DESTROY HER TYRANNY THEIR SACRIFICE WON'T BE FOR NAUGHT
ALL THOSE WHO DIED ON THE HONEYCOMB HELPED TO KEEP ALIVE AN IDEAL THAT UNITES ALL OF US AS BROTHERS AND SISTERS - EVEN UNDER THE MOST SOPHISTICATED OF DESPOTISMS THAT IDEAL IS LIBERTY!
WRAAM

THE SISTERHOOD TURNED YOU INTO REAL BEES— EFFICIENT, DISCIPLINED, HARD-WORKING. BUT WITHOUT JUDGEMENT, INDIVIDUALITY, OR FEELINGS BUT NOW---
I KNOW. ROB, THE FIRST HUMAN BEING TO BE BORN OF A MOTHER IN THOUSANDS OF YEARS IS GROWING IN MY WOMB.
YOU AND THE WOMEN ARE WITH ME AND EVEN AMON MAY BE CURED SOMEDAY SOON
THAT'S WHAT I LIKE TO HEAR. WE HAVE ENOUGH SUPPLIES TO SURVIVE AND START UP A NEW SOCIETY, EVEN THOUGH THE RADIOACTIVE EARTH ISN'T THE EASIEST PLACE TO BEGIN.
CAPTAIN ZORA, THE MAGNETIC POLES HAVE CHANGED SINCE THOSE OLD MAPS WERE MADE. THE SITE OF BRONCO'S TOMB USED TO BE ON THE FORTIETH PARALLEL, BUT NOW IT'S IN THE ARCTIC REGION
NO MATTER— FIND OUT EXACTLY WHERE IT IS NOW, AND WE'LL LAND THERE

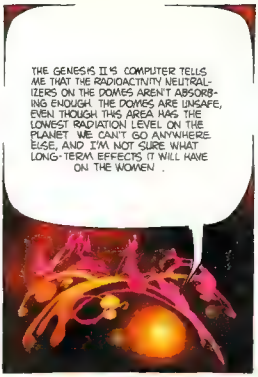
BRONCO'S CORPSE IS LAID TO REST IN THE TOMB HE HAD REQUESTED. HIS COFFIN IS LOWERED INTO ONE OF THE CRYPTS OF A TEMPLE NOT FAR FROM HIS PLACE OF BIRTH.

THE BUILDINGS SOARING TOWERS HAD MIRACULOUSLY SURVIVED COUNTLESS WAVES OF HUMAN DESTRUCTION. THEY STOOD IN MUTE WITNESS TO THE TRAGEDY OF A RACE THAT COULDN'T OUTLAST ITS OWN SYMBOLS.

WONDERFUL, ALEPA.
THESE SEEDS WILL GROW INTO PLANTS THAT WILL REPLENISH OUR OXYGEN SUPPLY, AND ALSO PROVIDE US WITH VEGETABLE PROTEINS.
LOOK HOW THEY'RE RESPONDING TO THAT MIRACLE FERTILIZER, KASLA.
EVERYTHING'S SPLENDID, ZORA. THE THREE GREENHOUSES IN DOME C ARE FULL OF FLOURISHING AND HEALTHY PLANTS.
ZORA! I NEED YOU IN THE CONTROL ROOM, IMMEDIATELY! DROP WHATEVER YOU'RE DOING.
CON ATENCION AL GENIO DE GALE. Moebius

WITHIN A FEW WEEKS, ATMOSPHERE-CONTROLLED DOMES SPROUTED FROM THE GROUND, CONSTRUCTED BY THE NEW INHABITANTS WITH MACHINERY THEY'D BROUGHT FROM THE HONEYCOMB. THE TEAM CONSISTED OF ROB, ZORA, AND FOUR TECHNICIANS.

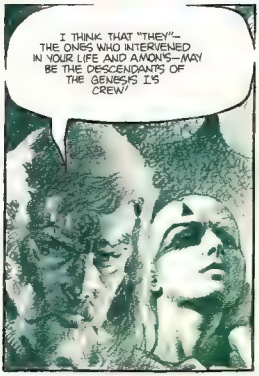
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN TO AMON?
NO--CALM DOWN. I'VE JUST COME UP FROM THE SHIP AND HERS THE SAME AS BEFORE. BUT WE'VE GOT SOME BIG PROBLEMS HERE, AND I WANT YOU TO BE THE FIRST TO KNOW


THE GENESIS II'S COMPUTER TELLS ME THAT THE RADIOACTIVITY NEUTRALIZERS ON THE DOMES AREN'T ABSORBING ENOUGH. THE DOMES ARE UNSAFE, EVEN THOUGH THIS AREA HAS THE LOWEST RADIATION LEVEL ON THE PLANET. WE CAN'T GO ANYWHERE ELSE, AND I'M NOT SURE WHAT LONG-TERM EFFECTS IT WILL HAVE ON THE WOMEN .

BUT ESPECIALLY ON YOU, ON AMON. AND ON YOUR UNBORN CHILD. YOU SHOULD RETURN TO THE GENESIS II AND TAKE OFF AS SOON AS POSSIBLE
GO
NOW? DO YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE SAYING? WHERE?

I FOUND SOME STELLAR NAVIGATION CHARTS ON BOARD WHICH SHOW THE ROUTE THE GENESIS I MUST'VE TAKEN.
BUT THAT WAS CENTURIES AGO--AND YOU SAID YOURSELF THEY'D NEVER BEEN HEARD FROM AGAIN!

THAT'S TRUE. BUT MAYBE WE JUST WEREN'T PICKING UP THEIR SIGNALS.
WHAT ARE YOU GETTING AT?


I THINK THAT "THEY"-- THE ONES WHO INTERVENED IN YOUR LIFE AND AMON'S--MAY BE THE DESCENDANTS OF THE GENESIS II'S CREW!

ROB'S REVELATION TROUBLED ZORA. HIS THEORY WAS ALMOST POSSIBLE--A LAST DESPERATE ATTEMPT THAT COULDN'T BE DISCOUNTED.
FOR HOURS, SHE PACED THE FROZEN GROUND OUTSIDE, CONTEMPLATING THIS STRANGE AND DESOLATE PLANET, PITYING IT FOR THE DEATH SENTENCE CAST UPON IT BY SELFISH INHABITANTS, WHICH SHE WAS POWERLESS TO ALTER. THEN SHE MADE HER DECISION. THEY'D HAVE TO RISK A JOURNEY.

WHEN SHE CALLED THE GROUP TOGETHER TO INFORM THEM OF HER DECISION, ZORA SAW A DETERMINED GLINT IN THEIR EYES.

LOOKS LIKE ROB BEAT ME TO IT.
YES, ZORA, I FILLED THEM IN--AND I'VE DECIDED NOT TO LEAVE MY BELOVED EARTH AGAIN
AND WE'RE GOING TO STAY HERE WITH HIM, CAPTAIN

BUT.
WE'VE THOUGHT IT THROUGH. WE'LL HAVE TO STRUGGLE TO SURVIVE, BUT WE'RE STRONG, ABLE-BODIED WOMEN
WE CAN BEAR CHILDREN, AND EVEN IF WE DIE THEY MAY HAVE A BETTER CHANCE WITH ROB'S BLOOD IN THEIR VEINS
YOUR CHILD, ON THE OTHER HAND, MUST BE BORN SOMEPLACE ELSE
THAT WAY WE'LL DOUBLE MANKIND'S CHANCE FOR SURVIVAL.

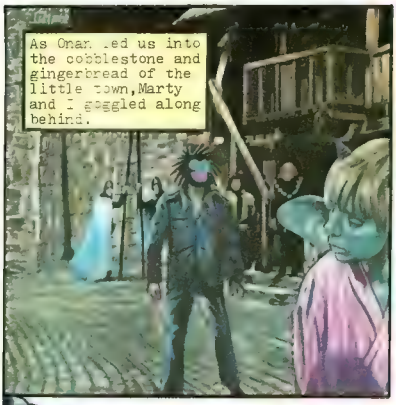
"THEY" ONLY CHOSE YOU AND AMON. ZORA. TRY TO FIND THEM. MAYBE THEY CAN TELL YOU HOW TO SAVE AMON.
I'LL DO IT. BUT PART OF MY SOUL WILL REMAIN HERE WITH YOU.

ZORA UNDERSTOOD THE RISK THEY WERE TAKING. THEY DIDN'T WANT TO INTERFERE WITH HER DESTINY, BUT THEY PREFERRED TO FIGHT IT OUT HERE ON EARTH. LOVE HAD WON THE LAST BATTLE AGAINST A RACE OF WARRIORS. THEY COULDN'T BEAR TO SAY GOOD-BYE. SO THEY PRETENDED IT WAS JUST ANOTHER ORBITAL FLIGHT

AND SO, CENTURIES LATE, THE GENESIS II BEGAN THE INTERSTELLAR FLIGHT FOR WHICH IT WAS BUILT.

HER DESTINATION. A TIME WHEN PAST AND FUTURE WOULD MINGLE, FAR FROM THIS EARTH, FROM THIS SOLAR SYSTEM, SOMEWHERE IN THE REACHES OF DEEP SPACE.
THE END
Corben

Wow!It's really beautiful...just like a painting!

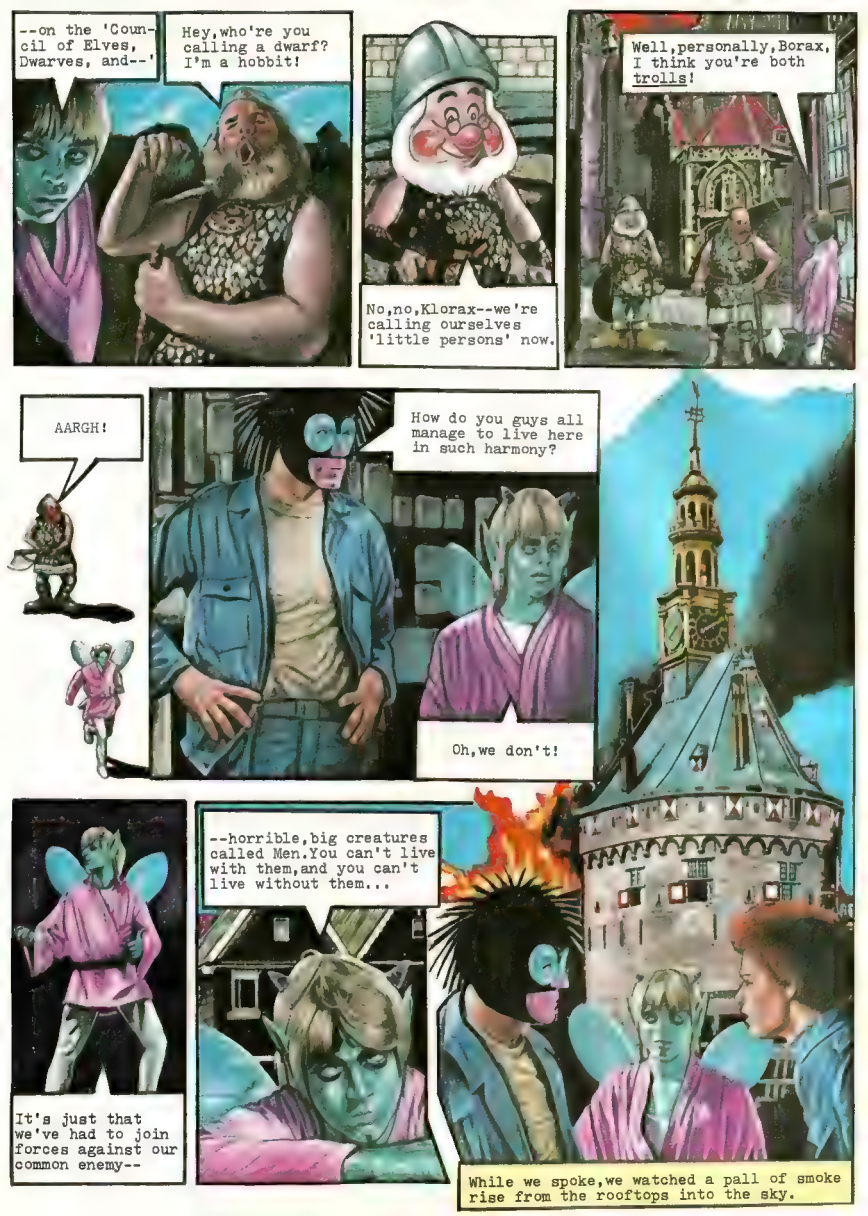

As Omar led us into the cobblestone and gingerbread of the little town,Marty and I goggled along behind.

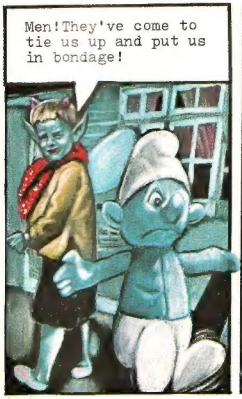
Hey,look at those dolls--they're kind of cute!

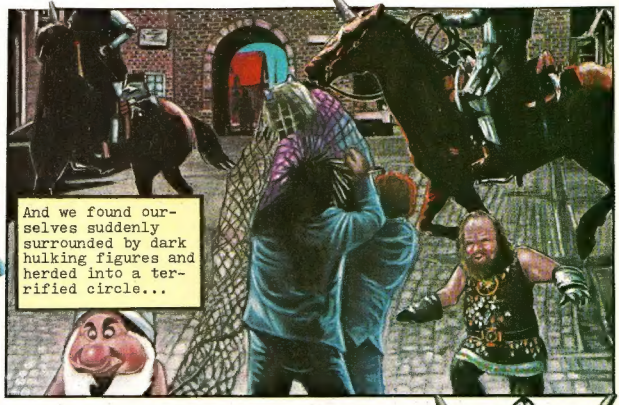
Oh,they're just Pixies. The big butch ones are called Brownies...

Hey,who're your friends,sweet-buns?
Hubba,Hubba!

Aren't they dreadful?I can hardly stand to share my seat with them--


--on the 'Council of Elves, Dwarves, and--'
Hey,who're you calling a dwarf? I'm a hobbit!
No,no,Klorax--we're calling ourselves 'little persons' now.
Well,personally,Borax, I think you're both trolls!
AARGH!
How do you guys all manage to live here in such harmony?
Oh,we don't!
--horrible,big creatures called Men.You can't live with them,and you can't live without them...
It's just that we've had to join forces against our common enemy--
While we spoke,we watched a pall of smoke rise from the rooftops into the sky.





To Be Continued...

the bus

PAUL KIRCHNER ©

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